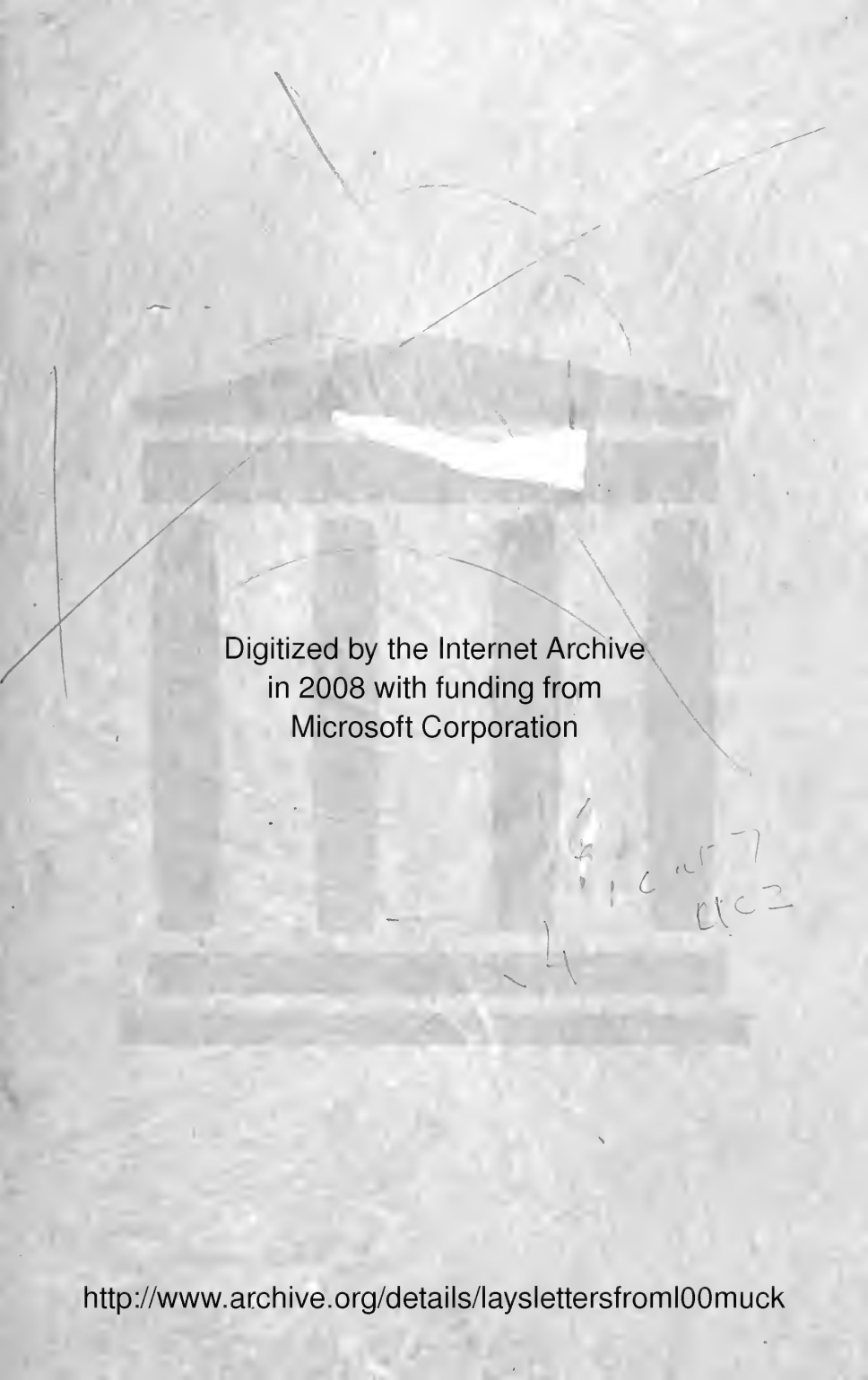




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LAYS AND LETTERS FROM LINTON.

E A S T L O T H I A N

A THREE-FOLD PICTURE—MOORLAND PLAIN AND SEA—

*Behold our Lothian, limn'd so matchlessly ;
Her rocky isles and castellated shore—
The blue waves fondling them for evermore !
The white-wing'd ships the sea-world couriers given,
Circling around her like the birds of heaven ;
Her heathy moors, a waving background grand—
Dark forests rolling to her happy strand !
Soft-contour'd hills upspringing from her breast,
Where labour struggles and is lull'd to rest,
Crystalline streams sweet-babbling thro' her vales,
Like wandering maidens singing true love tales—
Her fields, her plains, and—smoking far and near,
Her freemen's peasant homes—to peace and virtue dear.!*

S. M.

LAYS AND LETTERS

FROM

LINTON.

BY SAMUEL MUCKLEBACKET

(JAMES LUMSDEN).

Author of "Rural Rhymes," "Country Chronicles," &c.

HADDINGTON:

WILLIAM SINCLAIR, 63 MARKET STREET.

EDINBURGH: JOHN MENZIES & CO.

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TO
JAMES WATT, ESQUIRE,
PROVOST OF HADDINGTON—
THE
AUTHOR'S NATIVE TOWN—
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED WITH
MOST GRATEFUL FEELINGS,
FOR
ADVICE AND GREAT KINDNESS RECEIVED
FROM HIM.

537.73

PREFATORY NOTE.

The little town of East Linton is finely situated in the valley of the Tyne, midway betwixt the western and eastern extremities of East Lothian, and about three and a half miles distant from the nearest point of its north-eastern sea-board. The southern portion of the town is divided from the other and larger part by the East Coast Line of the North British Railway; and it is distant from Edinburgh 23, Glasgow 70, Berwick-on-Tweed 34, and London 372 miles, by rail. "Linton"—as its general and homely name is in East Lothian—has been a "Police Burgh" for many years, for it was one of the very earliest of the "wee toons" of Scotland which adopted the Lindsay Act. Consequently its municipal, and some other affairs are administered (and administered masterfully, too) by a full quorum of nine able-bodied, (and not too conspicuously consequential) Commissioners. This fine municipal body, when in full array, consists of the following indispensable members, namely, a Chief Magistrate (locally and fondly, "the Provost"), two senior Commissioners (the "Bailies"), a Town Clerk, a Treasurer, and three or four ordinary Commissioners, who are not in the cabinet. On the second Tuesday evening of every month these "most potent, grave, and reverend" gentlemen—or some of them—meet for the enactment of their occasionally very arduous public duties in the Free Church Hall—a commodious room enough, and fortunately, and appropriately, situated immediately under our highly-prized "Toon Clock" and its inspiring bell. Having often had occasion to visit the hall, when burghal business was in full blast (if such an epithet can be used to indicate snoring), we can with some assurance declare that it would be positively difficult to

discover a more decorous, or a more dignified and devoted band of public functionaries in the kingdom. Some evil-disposed folk dare to insinuate, indeed, that they are too decorous, too quiet, and that many things which should be loudly and strongly denounced, are scarcely even so much as heard of in the Council Chamber—but we cannot adopt this dictum, at least without large qualifications.

The present population of Linton is about 1000, that of the parish (Prestonkirk) 1,900—the rental of the latter being £15,860, and its area closely verging upon 5000 acres. Considerable portions of the town have only been built for the first time within the last thirty or forty years, but as it is strictly—almost entirely—an agricultural village, and as farming has been deplorably depressed in its vicinity for many years, the extension of the clachan has been withheld, and the place has stagnated lamentably for the last decade, or so. What it really lacks apparently is a public work or two, and it is surprising that this has not, ere this time, been gone into—considering its fine water power, its nearness to the sea, and its position on a main line of railway between Scotland and England. Surely, surely there is something rotten in the state of Denmark here?

Besides the famous parish church of Prestonkirk, Linton possesses two other ecclesiastical buildings, but these do not present any points of particular interest. It is far otherwise with Prestonkirk. There, the “Auld Kirk” occupies the site of an old Culdee place of worship—erected in the sixth century by St Baldred—the “Apostle of the Lothians,” and “a disciple of St Hentigern or Mungo”—who, on his arrival in this part of the country, took up his residence on the Bass, in conformity with the example of St Columba, and other “saints” of that period, who sought, by making their chief habitation and headquarters on islands near the principal scene of their labours, that retirement and safety which could not then be found on the rude and turbulent mainland. Fordoun, in the introductory chapter of

his "Chronicles," makes mention of St Baldred's religious establishment in this locality, and the fact is also referred to in the "Black Book of Cupar," and, moreover, specially accepted and detailed by Chalmers in his "Caledonia." By the last writer—indeed, we are told that St Baldred removed from the Bass to Tynninghame (a village about a mile further east than Preston, kirk), where he established a religious house, or college, principally as a school of instruction for his converts and followers.

From this centre he occasionally visited, and resided for a space in various districts "between the Lammermoors and Inveresk," and in the course of time founded churches at Auldham, Hamer (Whitekirk), and Linton (Prestonkirk), which last has, in one form or another, sheltered the "true worshippers" among the Picts, Saxons, Scots, Culdees, Romanists, Episcopal, and Presbyterians for thirteen hundred years. The ancient name of the Church of Linton began, shortly before the Reformation, to give place to that of the "Hauch," or "Halch," which again changed to "Prestonhaugh," and, yet again, in the last century, to Prestonkirk—its present, and, we trust, its final designation. Sir John Sinclair, in his "Statistical Account," says that it is mentioned in the Saxon annals under the Latin name of *Ecclesia Sancti Baldridi*, the titular saint of the place, and that the same old records bear that the Saxons, having made an irruption into East Lothian in the eighth century, burnt *Ecclesiam Baldridi et adjacentum de Tynningham*, and probably other churches in the district. Bearing this in mind, it becomes intensely interesting to learn that when the old church was taken down, for restoration, in 1770, "the oak beams bore on them in several places evident marks of fire; so that it is probable they had belonged to the ancient fabric, and if so, must have been there for over one thousand years!" Some spots and natural objects near by the church still bear the name of this renowned saint. There is to this day an eddy or whirlpool in the Tyne at Preston, known as "Baldred's Whirl," and also a "Baldred's Well," &c.

The scene of Prestonkirk was chosen for a church with the

eye of a profound artist and propagandist, and of a verity it is not difficult to find good reasons for St Baldred's preference for it as the site of his greatest church. The situation is one of great and peculiar beauty at all times, but particularly during summer and autumn. The church stands on the summit of a knoll or small eminence on the north bank of the river, and overlooks the public highway to North Berwick, *via* Tynninghame, about three hundred yards to the east of the lower or northern part of the town of Linton. This graceful and unique eminence slopes down gently and gradually on all sides—on the south to the slow-flowing, broad, and placid Tyne, and on the others to the surrounding lands of Smeaton. It rises, crowned with its ivy-mantled church, and from the midst of a surrounding maze of wonderful trees, and a matchless wealth of foliage, in our eye as the fit and hallowed scene and base of the grand old evangelist's operations; and the culminating point as well of a wide-extending district of great natural beauty and fertility, and agricultural richness and enterprise. Since the seventeenth century its neighbourhood, with all its many notable men, has stood pre-eminent in the science and practice of husbandry and kindred industries, and even now, we believe, it is unexcelled by any part of the United Kingdom in these departments of human activity.

Other than Prestonkirk, in and around Linton, there are many noteworthy places and edifices—*e.g.*, Traprain Law, Hailes Castle, the Linn, Balgone, Biel, Pressmennan, Binning Wood, Markle, &c.; but it would be manifestly out of place to devote space to them here, though of a surety every one of them is "weel worth gaun a mile to see." All that seems necessary to do in this introduction, in regard alike to Linton, Prestonkirk, and their surroundings, has already been written or indicated in the foregoing—that is, what may reasonably be accounted a sufficient description of the Linton locality, to enable a reader, whether a native or a stranger, fully to apprehend the several contents of this book so far as they relate to that locality.

Many of the "Lays and Letters" were in the first instance addressed to Editors—acquaintances of the writer—in whose publications not a few of them first appeared, under various headings, and in one shape or other. They, with many additions, have been drawn together and are now published in book form—simply because the writer and many of his friends deemed it advisable to do so. To them, also, for many reasons, was it very desirable. If a gross error has been unwittingly run into in the case—sure it is not the first, neither will it be the last, literary mistake perpetrated.

All that is asked from the fair and just critic is—that he may read the book honestly through, before pronouncing upon it. Were we assured of the generosity of our friend, we might also request him to remember (or as is likely, if he is unaware of our difficulties, to accept the sad fact of them on our word), the terrible days and nights of trials and troubles to the author, during which the "great feck" of the "Lays and Letters" were composed and scribbled. Two small pieces which were printed in a former work, reappear in this book—a fault which could not either be easily or properly avoided. At the same time, however, in the places which they now occupy in this volume, they are just where they were originally meant to be. Should the present one meet with a tithe of the success of the book alluded to, certes, ere long, in a certain "canny neuk" of East Lothian at least, there will be many russet rustic faces exhibiting the broad grin of heart-felt glee and satisfaction. Perhaps it is too audaciously presumptive to anticipate this?

The characters and images of all the chief persons figuring in the following pages were (or were attempted to be) "drawn from life," and two of them, namely, "Mrs Pintail" and "Samuel Macklebackit" still continue to endure it. "Sam," by many, has been supposed to mean the author! For this shocking blunder, however, the writer, in a great measure, has himself to blame; because the misapprehension originated through his

appending Sam's name as his pseudonym, or *nom de plume* to his pieces in the local papers; and because, in Sam's story, the people fancied they recognised not a few incidents, &c., which had undoubtedly been the sole experience and circumstances of the author himself. Stuff and nonsense. The study of this amusing error is to the scribe and a few friends a curious and interesting psychological exercise sometimes over a "toothfu'," and one that vividly demonstrates to them the really dreadful truth of the proverbial danger there is in playing heedlessly with edged tools. Speaking of a "toothfu'," reminds us to say that the frequent allusions to conviviality in the book (such as to the Dominie's "Tappit Hen," and the Piper's "Athole brose horn") should not be accepted too literally, for assuredly than those two worthies more temperate men in their eating and drinking never stepped forth and honoured bonny Scotland. Like the writer, both of them drew their inspiration from entirely other sources.

Mrs Pintail—"My Nannie O"—who is still "to the fore"—ay, the fore front, where, from her lassie-hood, she has ever been, is now a prominent resident and philanthropic citizen of Edinburgh, where the author never loses a single opportunity of interviewing her, when he is in the town and the proper mood. Mucklebackit, as of old, is "here, there, and God knows where," but as bold, vigorous, jokesome, and tender-hearted as ever he was and bids fair to rival even the Auld Dominie in respect to longevity.

All the others, alas! The fussy, yet shrewd and loveable, Auld Dominie; the heroic, the acute, and subtle, the prophetic, and philosophical, the never-to-be-forgotten "Piebald Piper"; and Jamie and Mrs Harsman, and the idolised John Hootsman, and Tam Coom, and "Heather Jock"—all, all of them, alas, are where both writer and reader must be—almost ere ever they are aware. *A la mode.* Yes, but *dum vivimus vivamus!*

S. M.

East Linton, 1889.

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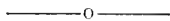
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LAYS & LETTERS FROM LINTON.



THE AULD DOMINIE.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

This first letter by my old schoolmaster, and afterwards brother, or neighbour farmer, was written by him a few months prior to the time of my final departure from Clover Riggs. Shortly after the period to which it alludes, I left again the locality of Linton and was far away from it for several years. About three months after coming back—for the last time, I hope—I accidentally foregathered with the fussy, shrewd, old pedagogue, much in the manner and under the circumstances which he describes so graphically in his second epistle. The celebrated tenant of the large farm of Blaebraes, near Linton, was a retired country schoolmaster, who rejoiced in the sedate and appropriate sobriquet of Thomas Pintail. At the date of the letter he and I had long been acquainted, for I had been a pupil of his long before that period—an urchin in his lower classes. At the time referred to he had held the farm for four or five years, and had, so far, succeeded surprisingly, considering the everlastingly fussy, fidgetty, gossiping character of the man. The extremely clever and energetic nature of his better half (who is still living and more prosperous than ever, although remaining in unmarried widow-

hood), no doubt would constitute an earnest of the Dominie's success as a farmer from the beginning, for Agnes, or still better known as "My Nannie O," was to him more by far than a common helpmate—in strict fact, she was truly his "guardian angel," his keeper, his lawgiver, and, I believe, when he wandered astray (which he would generally do about fifty times in a month), his saviour, judge, and jailer, also. Under an exterior of querulous "cursedness" and sauciness, however, one could easily perceive in the dame a deep underlying feeling of respect and devotedness for the factious, eccentric, and restless Dominie. The unique pair combined—the two as one in holy matrimony—really constituted a double or compound personage, who was fit to wage the battle of life right bravely and victoriously. What Tammas lacked Agnes possessed superabundantly, and *vice versa*. Their two sons and one daughter were, at the time the first letter was penned, all grown up, and well settled in Edinburgh and Glasgow—the daughter being married to a nephew of the universally-honoured and admired farmer of Leddyslove, John Hootsman, Esquire.

Of Thomas Pintail, the Dominie himself, it is extremely difficult to give anything like a correct idea, he was such an extraordinary moody, fitful, fluctuating, never-resting, chattering, will-o-the-wisp mortal withal. Nevertheless I will tackle to him, and give my readers as accurate a description of the famous "T. P." as I am capable of writing. Imagine, then, a very tall, thin, stooping old man, habited in buckled shoes, blue hose, worsted-cord knee-breeches, a snuff-coloured, swallow-tail coat with a high peaked collar, which almost reached to the crown of his head behind—a coat of the fashion common in the first years of this century—and a "lum" hat of the same period. The personal features of this fascinating human oddity were as keen and sharp as those of a greyhound, or a stirring, go-a-head Yankee. His brow, which was very ample, was overhanging and very wrinkled and shaggy at the eyes, and receded a little. The eyes themselves were small, bright gray, and eager and piercing

as those of a weasel. He wore no beard or moustache, and his meagre whiskers were thin and "lyart." His chin was prominent, but small and peaked, and his mouth, which in his prime had been full and large, was in old age (the birth-time of the letters) toothless and greatly fallen in, and there was everlastingly a snuff drop pendant at the extreme tip of his high, hooked, and nasal organ.

Such, as true as I can depict it, was the external aspect of this long-limbed and somewhat splay-footed genius, the late "maister" of Blaebraes. He was at the time of the letters of unknown but immense age. People living, but now approaching the end of their four-score years, declare to me that the Dominie was an old man when they were in their leading strings. Be this as it may, the inward nature—the moral and mental characteristics—of this gigantic "forked radish" answered well to the appearance of their corporeal lodgement. Above all he was combative (but harmlessly so, like the dog whose bark was worse than his bite) and argumentative to the last degree, and so he would split polemical and political hairs with a Hottentot—like a member of the first bench of the Opposition in the House of Commons. He was deeply read and largely informed in general literature, and chokeful of Scottish sectarian history. He was also one of the shrewdest and exactest observers I ever knew, and, without doubt, had his judgment and his discriminating and reflective faculties been anything like equal to his perceptive ones he would have made himself known even to a wider circle than he did. Next to his argumentativeness—if not on a par with it—was his most curious, prying, inquisitive disposition. Nothing gave him more heart-felt delight than to hunt up some *rara avis*, or local "celebrity," dispute with him there and then, pump him as dry as he could, ferret out all his peculiarities, ways, and manners, and then surreptitiously describe him totally in the columns of one or other of our newspapers.

In this way he has reported, with added flourishes of his own,

not a little of my own talk and other doings in his latter days ; but as he was on the whole a capital colloquist, and a patient listener when he was interested, I did not altogether discourage him. In the solitudes of the country one is often glad to meet with a willing and convenient listener—an agreeable and fit receptacle into whom one can freely pour the waste cogitations of his overcharged brains. Hence the Dominie's letters, &c.

It is to me a curious and remarkable fact that the three greatest men I ever came in contact with, Hugh Miller, the Auld Dominie, and the Piebald Piper, have all died violent deaths—the first lamentably by pistol shot, and the other two by drowning. I hope that this sad and somewhat extraordinary fact is not ominous of the manner of my own exit from the stage of this perplexing world.

S. M.

F I R S T L E T T E R.

AN ACCOUNT OF AN ICE BLOCK ON THE TYNE.

“ When winds aff cauldest airts do blaw,
An bar us in wi’ drifted snaw,
And hing us owre the ingle.”

Being, as I am, a man bowed down and laden with the burden of innumerable years, infirmities, and sorrows, together with the never-ending scoldings and complainings of an energetic and limber-tongued spouse, anything like perfect punctuality or Pharasaical regularity must not be expected of me ; although, depend upon it, “Auld Tam” shall at all times bustle him up and endeavour to do his best.

It is already thoroughly well-known that Blaebraes lies immediately adjacent to Clover Riggs, that world-wide celebrated haunt and renowned dwelling place of the matchless Mucklebackit—our own beloved and familiarly-known “Sam !” Between our respective steadings extends—which surely no ignoramus needs be told—a space of about one Scotch mile without the bittock ; but short as the distance is, the snow-storm verily effectually barred our usual daily intercourse with each other. The loss of this was felt by me in every faculty of my spirit and in every bone and sinew of my body, and I went nightly groaning to bed, suffering for lack of his exhilarating discourse and stimulating tumbler of toddy. At length, last Thursday, the road betwixt the farms was opened up by Mr Nelson in pure compassion ; and I crossed over in safety to Clover Riggs just as the people were loosing from the barn.

Mr Mucklebackit, I was told, was in the parlour, so I "stappit ben," unannounced, as of old. I found him sitting in his stocking-feet in the big chair, drawn up close and square, right in front of a tremendous fire, composed of a barrowful of mixed sawmill cuttings and Deans & Moore's coals. The sweat streamed down the deep gullies of his rugged, fierce, and startled-looking face, as he turned to salute me, and I could see at a glance that he had just returned from some extraordinary expedition.

"Oh, Mr Mucklebackit, dear Mr Mucklebackit ! what is wrang? where have you been?" I spasmodically, at intervals, inquired, as he shook me to pieces by the hand, and then hugged and squeezed me in his vast embrace, like as a sea dog is done by a huge Polar bear, for my gigantic friend had not yet doffed his large fur overcoat, and we had not met for three weeks previously. At lang and last, for lack of breath, "Oh, Tam, Tam !" he cried, "hoo's a' wi' ye? sit down, sit down, Tibb, the kettle—boil the kettle—the big ane, mak' the boiler bubble, fesh ben the tappit hen, mind the sucker. Dominie Pintail, hoo's a' wi' ye ; and hoo's your fair lady, the gentle, charming, Nannie, O?" (For long years back, let me here explain, Sam had been addicted to the reprehensible habit of waggishly designating my vigilant better-half behind her back by the poetical, but not in her case at all, appropriate title of "My Nannie, O!" I often have gravely expostulated with him against this custom, but he still wickedly adheres to it, and as I know him to be at heart a sarcastic knave, I begin to jalouse that the term in his mouth means nothing but "ironic satire sidelins sklentend.")

Well, after our salutations were made, and all the usual domestic inquiries had been duly honoured, I anxiously repeated my first query, and asked him where had he been. "Been !" he retorted fiercely, "been ; you auld gommerel. Weel may ye speer, 'Whare hae I been?' But I see that ye are burstin' wi'

curiosity, sae in pity I shall e'en ettle tae relieve you gif you will only steek, or draw some closer, the portals of that awfu' mooth, whilk is gapin' e'enoo like a riftelud i' the deid oor o' nicht!" After somewhat confusedly bringing together my lips, which had, I must confess, in my astonishment separated, and kept themselves apart rather widely and vulgarly. Sam put his tumbler to his mouth, and then laid himself out as follows:—"When I got up this morning, Pintail, an' saw what was what owre-heid i' the sky, quoth I to mysel', 'Tyne will break up this day, sure.' Sae, after I had started the folk to the dung, I slippit cannily awa' by mysel' an' the collie doug through the fields riverwards. Tam, believe me, I hae trampit this day, waist-deep, through as muckle snaw as nicht staw and turn the stamack o' the discoverers of a hail bundle of North Poles. Wreaths o' snaw? Wreaths! Man, Dominie, I tell ye, I passed and rounded at a safe distance this day on my journey as mony mounds and mountains, hillocks and hills, and peaks and pyramids, of pure snaw, as whilk, had they been not snaw but granite or whin stone, would soon have taken the shine out o' sic moudiewarts as the Ochils, Tintoc Tap, an' sich. Weel, after nearly losing my chart among the gorges and deep ravines of this Canadian scenery, and at the cost of gallons of perspiration and half-hours of the most exhausting labour imaginable, I at last struck the Tyne between Stevenson and Hailes Castle. The river there was clear, but swollen and turbid, and upon its glancing expanse floated, slid, or tumbled past, numberless portions of shattered ice, of every conceivable form and size. After I had glowered awhile, and taken in and absorbed the whole scene, I noticed floating and whommling towards me a considerably larger berg than the general, and quickly did I make me ready, for, from the moment I first perceived it coming swooping down in the distance, I resolved, if possible, to board it. As it was shooting past, within about four or five feet from the bank, I said hurriedly a short prayer, spat on my hands, made a bound, landed aboard all right, and instantly took entire possession. I then whistled on the collie, and in the fraction of a jiffey, the newly enlisted tar was

at my side—the most able-bodied sailor, excepting the captain, aboard. In a short time, I luckily succeeded in grabbing and fishing on deck a paling-rail, about fifteen feet long, so, with this handy rudder or scull I took post astern, while the faithful collie at once figure-headed and manned the bow. Soon were we in mid-channel, and making seaward at railway speed, for never did sailing vessel or steamship fly as we flew. I have assisted to pilot rafts of logs adown some of the ‘creeks’ in America, as I have told you of before, Dominic, but I don’t think I ever enjoyed so excitable a ‘run’ as the one I experienced this morning on the breakfast-looking table of ice adorning my native stream. The only drawback, I thought (after I had got safe ashore), was its shortness. In the deep pools at and above Hailes Castle, the ice still held together, and of course the blocks from the higher reaches of the river had to halt behind and wait till this moved. In this way, Tammas, the block increasingly extended during the early part of the day from Fadden’s Hole, two hundred yards above the castle, westward as far as the Mill Dean, fully three-quarters of a mile, and presented a most novel and grotesque spectacle—the scene reminding me vividly of the muster and formation of a grand public procession, such as one of those annually witnessed when I was a youngster in Haddington of the Oddfellows or Freemasons. Every moment fussily arrived at the gathering point at the west-end parties of bergs, singly or in groups, which were every one at once taken in tow by some unseen agency, halted, directed, wheeled about, coaxed, shoved, or thrust headlong into their allotted positions. And strange positions, indeed, some of those dispersed offspring of winter did occupy! The rank and file of this hoary array assumed more or less a recumbent attitude; but the higher members, the apparent superiors or officers of this vast army of the Ice King, edged up, leaned, or stood bolt upright in their lyart uniforms, and boldly surveyed and watched the field. All were in silent suspense, awaiting the grand moment to march, but their chieftain ahead, himself, dour Jack Frost, still stubbornly restrained them. His (John’s) headquarters and

last entrenchment were immediately in that portion of the river below the old Castle of Hailes. A little after three o'clock, from beneath the venerable ruins, were heard to issue a succession of weird and unearthly noises—growlings, crackings, muffled explosions, angry mutterings, rumblings, curses, hisses, and defiant Billingsgate—as if a veritable subaqueous Home Rule meeting was being held there. This, as it proved, was bold Jack Frost being counselled and compelled to assent to an immediate stampede seaward, his present foothold on the river being no longer tenable, for the thaw——” “Why, Sam, Sam!” I here impatiently edged in, “Oh, Sam, this is all balderdash and pure imagination. You are as excited as if you were recounting the positive defeat and overthrow of an actual army. How, in the name of common sense, could you or any one possibly fancy the meagre sounds produced by the breaking up of a paltry sheet of ice to have been the audible communings of the Frost King and the officers of his staff?” “You blockhead!” wrathfully interposed Mucklebackit, “you auld miserable, dry-as dust, literal, pedagogic sump! What hae ye dune? ye hae broken the spell at the very nick an’ climax o’ the sooblime enchantment! Haud yer tongue, or gae hame at ance, for I maun finish this recital in my ain way, else wadna sleep enfauld her weary wings on my eyelids this nicht. As I was saying, by three o’clock, the river was packed and jammed fou with broken ice for nearly a mile abune the auld castle—not sae much as ae inch o’ bare water to be seen owre the haill streetch. Suddenly, at about half-past three, General Frost struck camp, and retreated with those nearest him pell-mell over the mill dam. The knowledge of this seemed instantly to have been transmitted through the whole legion, for directly the entire frozen phalanx was astir and in motion. Such a sight! I would not have lost it for even six cosy years of fireside book-reading, with auld Tibb darning stockings at my side. To the sad music of the hollow wind, piping shrilly in the naked trees overhead, the hoary Arctic pageant, like winter’s own funeral march, moved on, and was lost in the eternal. Silently, and apparently reluctantly at first,

each individual unit of the vast icy troop stirred itself, fell into its appointed place in the ranks in silent order, and then was whirled away. All the time, louder and louder soughed the wailing wind, and harsher and harsher roared the rising flood beneath and behind ; and, ere long, the mighty procession of bergs was seen tossing, jostling and struggling, down the valley in disastrous turmoil and retreat. Swish-swash, hurry-scurry, rumble-tumble, like the French in their flight from Waterloo, poor Winter's dispersed offspring, in final defeat and overthrow, were swept confusedly before the thaw, whose victorious and pursuing forces every drain, ditch, and burn were debouching in ever-increasing volume and power. In half-an-hour all was over ; and the only tokens left that such a drama had been enacted a few minutes before, were a scattered remnant of stranded bergs, left high and dry on either bank."

SECOND LETTER.

[The reader will kindly remember that a hiatus of some years extended between the periods of the first and this the second letter of the venerable teacher.]

MUCKLEBACKIT'S RETURN AND DISESTABLISHMENT.

"Todlin' hame, todlin' hame,
As round as a neep came todlin' hame."

—*Old Song.*

It is not true that I am dead. The entire story from end to end is a heartless and a malicious fabrication of falsehood. The mere fact that you are now perusing this letter is proof conclusive that I was at least living not more than two or three days ago. And, moreover, when this lucubration left my desk, I felt not only alive, but indeed exceedingly *leesome* and life-like and happy and could have jumped over all the Tories in Scotland—and was as vigorous and energetic as if I still had been in my twenties. Nevertheless, I am fully aware that it may be pertinently and justifiably asked how do I account for my long, profound, and most unnatural silence? The "Old Dominic" was wont to be heard in East Lothian? This query is easily answered. Great or small, loud or low, whatever my note may be, it is only as that of an echo—as all other human voices, save only those of a favoured few, two or three in the lapse of an age, must be. My great chief and inspirer, in whom publicly I lived, moved, and had my being, has, for a time exactly corresponding to that of my lamentable silence, been mysteriously wandering and sojourning in parts remote—far, far, alas! beyond my longing

sight and ken. Therefore, my mournful and melancholy muteness. The absence of Mucklebackit was more than sufficient to give the quietus to a whole tribe of mere promulgators and propagandists such as Pintail.

Lately, however, strange and startling rumours began to be whispered abroad, which anon were deftly breathed into the somewhat hairy portals of mine ancient ears; and at last it was reported to me by a faithful servitor that Sam was returned, and had actually been seen by divers benighted travellers haunting the scenes of the departed glory. Yes. Everybody declared he was certainly back again, but that in the meantime he only left his secret lair, like the lions, after nightfall. Months passed—blank desolate months—unblest with one peep of him, *de die in diem*. I was now in the extremity of despair, raving, and on the verge of giving up the ghost. But, the unexpected sometimes happens. The other night I was returning from a large meeting of “Liberal Churchmen,” which had been holden in a tailor’s back shop, and was forlornly enough trudging about midnight through the somewhat sombre little hollow in which are still seen brokenly standing the weird and naked ruins of the venerable castle of Hailes. Suddenly, I heard a footfall close by my side, and instantly I halted and looked up. “Angels and ministers of grace!” what was it? A gigantic figure, plaided, muffled, and in deep shadow—a figure like unto that of an antediluvian, stalked firmly and silently by my side. Tremblingly, I gasped hysterically—“Whence comest thou? I know thee not. Avaunt!” “What! ye cankert, camsteerie, feckless, glaiket gomerall, what’s wrang wi’ ye? Ken na ye me—eh?” Will the world believe it? The giant, the antediluvian, was none other than *the* Mucklebackit.

What passed betwixt us during the first ecstatic half hour of our re-union no ear of mortal mould shall ever learn. Our salutations and sacred rites of hallowed friendship at length enacted, we retired with one accord to the top of a knoll near the old castle, and sat us down. This scene at midnight was

weird and unearthly ; yet grand, solemn, and impressive. The stars looked down upon us ; a vast extending concave of cloudless azure canopied us ; the softest of balmy zephyrs fanned and refreshed us ; flowers and herbs innumerable, and “milk white” hawthorns diffused their fragrance to us ; the dark woods and trees danced and bobbit to us ; while all the time the sedge-singer and the fascinating “howlet” sang and hooted to us. It was an impressive scene. Low down on the northern horizon a broad spatch of bright unearthly-looking light betokened where the “Witching hour” was being drawn in her triumphal car. All was sublimity and elevation of spirit ! Mucklebackit sat spell-bound and could not speak. And I think the “howlet” perceived us and sympathised with our rapt adoration, for it was strangely silent all the while.

At last, in order to destroy in its earliest stage a painful drowsiness which I felt was beginning to creep over me, I shouted loudly in Sam’s ear, “Clover Riggs !” At the sound of the dear old familiar name, he roused up and shook himself like a newly-unharnessed horse, and pensively enquired, “Where had I been ?” I told him at the great meeting of “Liberal Churchmen” in the back shop, and he then asked me what had been the result of it. I replied that a motion had been carried by a majority in favour of the continued establishment of the Church. Whereupon, he nimbly bent forward, and keenly scrutinised my face, and hissed out between his set teeth, the following demand, “How did *you* vote ?” “Vote !” I cried, “why for the Establishment, of course.” “For the Establishment !” he rejoined, in his old serio-comic, mock-combastic way, “for the Establishment ! a fine pillar o’ the Kirk you’ll mak’. Faugh !” “Why Sam, Sam, what ails you ? you’re a member of the Kirk yourself.” “Ay !” he retorted quickly, “an’ prood to be. Dominic, Disestablishment is a theme I have given some consideration to, and I think that the disestablishers have the best of the argument ; and therefore I believe that Disestablishment will assuredly happen—happen when it may. It *must* come—I think—because it is right.”

"Oh, Mucklebackit!" I groaned, "you dumbfounder me. How on earth can you reason so? Would you really destroy the Church of your fathers—the Church with such a history—the Church of Scotland—the free Church of the poor?" "Destroy, you sumph!" he retorted somewhat violently. "Destroy: Wha speaks aboot destroyin'? The Kirk will gain a new lease he't—a lease mair prosperous an' glorious than ony she's ever trowed yet; because she will then exist an' flourish, unhated by her rivals, free an' unshackled; and because she will then become in a more tender and endearing degree the beloved and cherished parent of all her grateful and devoted children." "How do you make that out?" I queried. "Would you rob or confiscate the endowments of the Church? They are her own property: property has its rights; and those of the Church are at least as inalienable as those of any other institution." "*Inalienable!*" he rejoined. "Look here Pintail! I have neither reached firm nor sure ground in the ford of Disendowment yet. I am only wading painfully and cautiously across—feeling my way step by step, as it were; but up to this time I am still at sea, albeit I fancy that I can trace the outline of the distant shore. The question is—Would Disendowment pay? (To question the 'right' of the State to do so is foolishness.) I should think it would, but all would depend upon the terms of disendowment. Any way, there are at present extant some most absurd anomalies, and many instances of shameful waste of the funds of the Church—funds which are the property of the people, and not exclusively of one section of them.

"Altogether the question is a matter for the people to decide themselves, and for this reason I think that the subject should have time to ripen, although at the same time I believe that there will be little peace in Scotland until it is disposed of. A main reason for desiring Disestablishment with me is that I think it would inevitably prepare and clear the ground for a reunion of the several Presbyterian denominations; and thus remove the prime instigation of the major portion of those

unseemly and unbrotherly and sectarian alienations, squabbles, jealousies, envyings, grudges, spites, and the too often deadly animosities, which disturb and divide our Scottish Zion so much at present. We are one in the "essentials," one in ritual, one almost in Church government—why then divided, wasting our strength, our substance, and our time in disputing, and reviling, and brawling with each other? Are ye sleepin' man?" "No, Samuel, dear," I said, "but I am overcome with sorrow—grieved to the core—to hear you exhale such puerile monstrosities. Surely your late wanderings to and fro on the earth have unsettled your mind? Can you really desire the downfall of the Kirk of Scotland—the church of the needy, the unfortunate, and the poor! Oh, Sam, Sam!" "What! ye fashionless gumpus," he warmly ejaculated, jumping to his feet. "Wad I tak' the Kirk frae the puir. Oot upon ye. Steek the kirk door on the puir. Man, Dominie, disestablishment in a wee while wud fill the kirk fu'er than ever. I have seen it in Canada and America. The Scotch people baith directly and indirectly pay for the kirk already, and were it disestablished to-morrow, they (the people who were able) would only at the worst have to dole out all the needful straight from the pouch—which they well could afford to do, being entirely relieved from school rates and fees. Besides, such is human nature, religious ministrations would then be far more sought after and prized—for a thing that's gotten cheap (or apparently cheap) is just as cheaply appreciated and valued. This, however, would not apply to education; because the education of all capable children is compulsory. The business management of the Church, also, would become revolutionised. Churches would be planted in abundance wherever an abundance of them was really needed. Amalgamations of small and detached congregations of the "Free," the "U.P." and the "Auld" would be the mode all round—one minister in scores of districts gladly undertaking and accomplishing for a sum no larger than his present "stipend" the work of three, and I tell you they will preach in churches and to congregations worthy of the name then; and not in gaping, ghastly, unsightly mockeries

of hideous, gloomy, cold, dreary, droughty barns : to half-filled or empty long rows of ugly wooden benches, as at present." "Well, well, Sam. Could I feel assured that your picture would be realised, I would go in for Disestablishment also ; but I am in the gravest doubt and perplexity. Your successor in Clover Riggs, Mr Riddle, who is a Free Churchman, and who, if requested, is willing to stand for the county, is not in favour of Disestablishment." "Ha, ha, Dominie," he rejoined merrily, "that Riddle will not hold water. My worthy successor is a talented fellow and one who is a million times more fortunate than poor 'Sam,' but he will yet see the error of his ways, and come over to us. Dominie, gae hame to Nanny, the young morn is already red wi' laughin' at the fleein' nicht. I'll daunder up your length this day week. We'll explore the kirk frae the foond to the waather cock on the steeple o't." "Oh, Sam," I cried eagerly and imploringly, retaining his hand, "Will you really come? Agnes will loup to see you again. Never a day passes but she is speaking about you. Oh, come Sam—do. Will you?" "Come, yes, certainly! Why not? Ta-ta, my trusty fiere! Dinna forget the Tappit Hen."

THIRD LETTER.

MUCKLEBACKIT'S VISIT, &c.

"It is after six o'clock! I tell you again, Agnes, this is the evening he said he'd be here. And he hasn't come! Whatever on earth shall I do?" cried I despairingly to my aged better half as I rampaged furiously through the house—kicking the cats aside and tearing my hair—almost distraught with desponding apprehensions that "something had come in Mucklebackit's way, and would prevent the accomplishment of his promised visit." Agnes, who is very fortunately of a less excitable and nervous temperament, took the delay more coolly and good-heartedly, after her own peculiar way, tried to cheer me and keep me alive with her own hopes that Sam, though late, would yet put in an appearance. "Hoot awae, Dominie," says she, "hoot awae man! Ye ken fine that Sam is as gude as his word, and ne'er disappointed ye even ance in the bygone times; and what wey sid he do sae e'enoow? Sit down, ye gouk, an' content ye! Are ye gaun to gang gyte a'thegither? I'll rin up an' keek out the upstairs window an' see." Rap, tap, tap; somebody at the door! The three cats bounced simultaneously with astonishing celerity from their couch on the hearthrug, and wisely hid themselves instanter away under the sofa. The two collies also roused themselves and flew through the lobby to the "fore door" like Tartars, disputing louder than a full conclave of Town Councillors the threatened intrusion into their own rightful domain. The servant lass, however, with a few well-aimed cuts with the kitchen poker, quickly caused the clamorous canines ignominiously to beat a retreat towards the back settlements, where, for half an

hour afterwards, they might have been heard *yumpling* and complaining to each other of their dire defeat and doleful distress. As soon as I could be heard, I cried impatiently—"Agnes! Oh, Agnes! is't him? Ask Jenny!" "Wheest, wheest!" she answered testily—"Losh! can ye no' wait till she brings him ben?" With that Jenny pressed ajar the half-open parlour door, discovering in her immediate rear the large, hirsute, and embrowned countenance, and the herculean form of the modern colossus of the east. "What! Nanny!" shouted Sam, as he shook her by the hand, and gazed upon her the first time for four years. "Hoo's a' wi' ye? Losh, lassie, ye're lookin' weel. Younger than ever!" "Oh, Mr Mucklebackit," she demurred, pleasedly, "Oh, Sam; whae wad hae thocht to've seen you here again! Sit down!—Gie me yer stick!—Tak' aff yer plaid! Oh, guid forgie' us a'!", &c., &c.

In due time the three of us were snugly clustered around the tea-table—just as often we'd been in the olden time, the hallowed memory of which subdued us all. Agnes, completely thawed, giggled and girmed at once, myself ecstatically ditto, and Sam sat thoughtfully, silently and voraciously devouring the viands like a wolf. It was presently evident that before his awful appetite was somewhat appeased, conversation was out of the question, therefore until he had disposed of his fifth or sixth cup, together with some towers of cheese and cookies, neither Agnes nor I advisedly uttered one single word. After the seventh, however, the flood gates of speech were instantly thrown apart, and a three-some interlocutory on farming and other rural affairs poured forth from us in a full-tide volume—Agnes, as I have indicated, cleverly contributing her share to the swelling theme. In this preliminary dialogue Mucklebackit gave it out as his opinion that the agricultural depression had now reached its lowest, and that better times might now be expected to emerge from the future. In a few years, he declared prophetically, the British farmer (though in a somewhat different style) would be in a safer and more secure position than ever.

His industry could never die, and a thorough reform of the land laws was only needed completely to resuscitate it. Amen !

After tea, Sam and I sauntered out of doors to breathe a while the caller air, and daundered, enjoying each other, as far as the turnip break, which I wished to show him. I was happy to observe that our walk round the old place did not seem too greatly to dispirit him, by painfully awakening in his mind recollections of other and happier days. Betimes, in the course of our quiet stroll, we reached the little rustic bridge which spans the burn above the stackyard, and here, at length, my friend halted, drew himself together, and, pointing significantly to the little rude structure, said feelingly, "Dominie, this is the bit. It was from this wee brig that Nannie (Mrs P.) fell into the spate while gathering in the deuks ae c'enin' langsyne. An' if ye mind, it was here too, Dominie, that you an' me ance argued for five hours at a stretch wi' the electioneering agent body frae Haddington. Ye'll nae doot be able to confirm that a' that I predicted to you an' him that day has been wonderfully fulfilled—realised to the letter? He thought Lord Elcho had not the ghost of a chance at the then approaching election, and, but for fricht, would have assaulted me for contradicting and laughing at his nonsense." "That's a fact, Sam," I replied. "I remember it well; but I also recollect that you said that a black day was coming for Lord Elcho himself. Were you not out there?" "No, indeed, Dominie. It is coming—it is even now impending. I was thinking then of the power of an enlarged constituency, and I foresaw—or thought I foresaw—the inevitable result, the unavoidable and certain end and overthrow of the old Toryism in East Lothian, and said so accordingly."

"What 'certain end and overthrow' do you mean Sam? The Liberals are a cloven host, divided irretrievably in equal halves by the Church question and the Irish question, and consequently—lacking, as they do, other powerful influences—cannot possibly put in their man. Are you of the caucus,

Mucklebackit?" "No, I am not, nor never was. When the Liberal Association was started I was absent—far awa'—and I never joined it. But tak' tent, Dominie, and do not run away with the superficial idea that our divisive courses will so surely ensure victory to the enemy. I do not believe it. I decidedly think, on the contrary, that the working men of East Lothian are too shrewd and sensible, and too keenly alive to their interests, to admit that. Believe me—they ken a scone frae a stone, and will prefer the bread." "Yes, Sam," I rejoined, "but if that 'scone' is buttered with Disestablishment, the bread to many will be as so much muck." "Na, na, Dominie—na, na. If the butter were scraped off, the bread would still remain—though leeze me on the Liberal scone, butter an' a'. Both of them to some, no doubt, would be unpalatable; but let these take heart, for the bread is still unspread and the butter unchurned. Disestablishment is not yet a front question—it is not even within measurable distance of being so. Before it can become possible, the unquestionable voice of a united people must demand it. At present there are few tokens of this—only infantile lisping and piping child-like cries. I know that events come with startling rapidity in these times; but, notwithstanding, I believe that no British Parliament would sanction Disestablishment before it had been a test question at the polling booth. But here we are back again. Let's in, an' hear what Nannie says aboot it." "Lord have a care o' me! whare hae ye been?" exclaimed and demanded my strong-minded beloved, as we jocosely re-entered the cosy "spence." "What hae ye been doin'?" At your auld argal barglin' again, I'se warrant. Were politics potauties ye waud baith choke." "Maybe, Mrs Pintail," laughed Sam, "but my politics, the Dominie tells me, are buttered scones; an' if they are, an' gif they eat like yours, I'm provided for." "Hoots toots," quoth she, "I kenna what ye mean, sit down, Jenny will be ben e'enuo wi' the Tappit Hen—anither auld friend o' yours."

So saying, and laughing at herself like one bewitched, my able and hospitable spouse went to fetch the hot water and sugar,

with which in a jiffy she returned, and had us immediately snugly ensconced round the little parlour table discussing, as in the olden time a smoking bowl of punch, the quality of which was undeniable. "Here's t'ye, Mrs Pintail," cried Sam, leading off, "here's t'ye. I trow I ne'er saw ye lookin' better. Lang life an' luck an' love to the lassies. Tak' heart o' grace, altho' your champion, Lord Denman, has been foiled this time; he is unconquerable; your cause is the cause of the just—you will yet be enfranchised—the women will win—eh, Dominie?" "I hope not votes," I returned quickly. "For were they to band together, they would swamp the men." "No," said Sam, "only the unmarried portion of them. And a saving clause could be framed and implanted in the bill, which would prohibit and withhold electoral privileges from all maidens who declared themselves to be under thirty years of age, and that, I reckon would be effectual." "Sam, Sam!" interposed Agnes, "let us alane. It isna fair, or gallant either, for twa gentlemen sae to jeer ae leddy. My sooth! had we the franchise an' 'equal rights,' you Disestablishers wad hae to jouk. Lord Elcho nicht shake defiance in yer face, an' march to the poll as proud as a town crier." "Ha, ha!" roared Sam, amused with the comicality of the idea so innocently presented, "Ha, ha!"—at the first blast of the trumpet, an' at the head o' anither monstrous regiment of women. Weel dune, indomitable Nanny!" "However, Mrs Pintail," he resumed, suppressing, with a heroic effort, his loud and long guffaw, "laying a' jokes aside, tell me—Wad ye not vote for Mr Haldane?" "No! He's maybe liberal eneuch, an' clever eneuch, an' gude eueuch—but he's no' for the Kirk. The Dominie an' me, for a wonder, are baith agreed on that." "Yes, dear Mucklebackit," I solemnly asseverated, "I also could not see my way to support a candidate who would separate Church and State—our harmony on all other points notwithstanding."

No sooner were these last words spoken than Mucklebackit rapidly and informally drained his tumbler and instantly

bounded to his feet, his whole frame convulsed with irrepressible emotion. "Friends," he cried, "Mrs Pintail, and you, Dominie, listen to me. Ye baith want—ardently desire—a real reform of the land laws. Ye baith long for a thorough measure of local government. Ye baith seek further educational reform. Ye baith eagerly wish and work for ampler housing and healthier sanitary conditions for the working classes. Ye baith go in sincerely for popular control of the liquor traffic—local option. Ye demand justice and full redress of all grievances for Ireland; equal rights, equal privileges, a fair field and no favour for Scotland; a drastic reformation of both Chambers of Parliament—the House of Lords especially; colonial federation; a policy of non-intervention but of unyielding uprightness towards all foreign peoples; and undiluted free trade, civil and religious liberty; equal rights and laws, and peace, reform, and retrenchment for ourselves. You desire, you say, all these and many more good things, and you believe implicitly that the Liberal party is the only party capable of procuring them for you, and yet, you say, you are ready to render their procurement impossible—or at least to prevent their acquirement it may be for many years—by disowning and deserting that party, by sacrificing your principles, by stifling your convictions, voting for those whose whole history has shown them to be antagonists of progress. And for what are you willing to do this? Because, forsooth, you are entangled with a crotchet, betrayed with a will-o-wisp, bound hand and foot on the high back of a hobby. Your church is in danger—the black coats loudly aver it, and therefore it must be so. Your battle-cry and slogan is, the 'Kirk, the Kirk,' Dominie, living or dying, the Kirk, the Kirk! By doing this, my friends, of course you are only playing the game for your political opponents. You have tilled the soil, you have sown the seed, and now you are turning your back on your own and running away from the harvest. Preposterous?" "But, dear Sam!" I interjected mournfully, as he resumed his seat, "we consider the Church question to be a vital one—paramount over all others—and it is not us, the friends of the Church, but those who are

attacking the Church, that are thrusting it to the front, and into the arena of what they call practical politics." "That's stuff and nonsense," he retorted impatiently. "But were it really a vital question—which I say, it is very far from being yet—you must admit its vitality can only at the utmost touch a mere fraction of the people, whilst the other reforms enumerated will affect the whole nation. Besides, I repeat, no conceivable British Parliament would—or could, for that matter—disestablish the Church without having the clear and outspoken approval of the country at large. What, therefore, I humbly think, it behoves Scottish Liberal candidates to do is, at once to follow the example of Mr Marjoribanks, M.P. for Berwick, and give, like him, a pledge that they will resign their seats (if elected) and hazard re-election if ever, and as soon as, a serious measure for Disestablishment is introduced into the new Parliament."

During the remainder of the evening, much more on these and kindred topics was discussed, interspersed and enlivened with many original songs and parodies, for which I have no space, and a jaunt to the seaside in our own dogcart was arranged to be taken by the three of us that day week.

F O U R T H L E T T E R.

A DRIVE TO THE SEASIDE.

The morning of the 9th day of July was to us in many respects a memorable one. I was standing on end by the bedside that morning by half-past four, and so also was Mrs P.—both of us without doubt, awake. We were bound for a trip to the seaside in our own dogcart, and were besides, to meet Mucklebackit, who had consented to accompany us, down at the Ford by six o'clock. As Agnes had been shrewdly preparing for the jaunt for a whole week before the auspicious day, she managed, with the deft aid of the servant lass, to get ready at last—not much more than three-quarters of an hour behind the stipulated time. But my spectacles and her gloves had been mislaid the night before, and could not be found anywhere.

The whole house was turned upside down and searched for them, but in vain. I was not angry—oh, no! I never am—but I was a little piqued, and had a strange tendency to blaspheme some. Fortunately all the bottles and victuals had been packed and stowed away in the trap the night previous, and so at last we got off. And when we were off about a mile or so, we became gradually conscious of some one bawling loudly behind us, and on looking back, behold it was Jenny, the servant lass, with our gloves and spectacles. After all the seeking and searching, there they were. She had discovered both the missing articles lying behind my desk, where I had abstractedly laid them when fetching the cork-screw. This discovery was a grand triumph to Agnes, and she exultantly made the most of it. I waved aside

her annoying hilarity, however, by stoutly maintaining that the things would never have been lost at all if she had only risen from her bed half-an-hour earlier. Our conjugal bickerings over this one topic afforded us mutual entertainment till we reached the river. There—ah, there! I shall never forget our arrival. However, I shall say nothing about it, but wisely leave it entirely to the imagination of the reader. Mucklebackit was there before us in his canonicals—that is, he sported for the occasion his hoddens-grey suit, and his indescribable American sombrero—an immense wide-awake hat, of about the dimensions of an ordinary gig wheel, and twirled jauntily in his hand his renowned ash sapling—a long, rugged, knotty stick, as lithe and supple as a cow's tail. His "Tib," or "Tibbie," accompanied him, which happy circumstance made Agnes still further greatly to rejoice, for, said she, "the neeborhood o' Tibbie wad mak' her feel mair at ease—as twae gentlemen an' ae leddy thegither didna sowther weel." "Hallo, Mrs Pintail," cried Sam, approaching the vehicle, and gently pushing Tib before him, "I thoct ye werena comin'—Tib an' me fell asleep waitin' for ye. Sit about a wee, mem. Npw Tib—here goes, ance, twice, thrice—up ye go. Nanny an' you maun ligg an' lair thegither i' the backside o' the machine—but ye maunna fecht. I'll tak' the Auld Dominie in han' mysel' i' the front. Be na fleyed—I'll manage him. Gee up, Donal; off we go!"

After the ascent of the northern bank of the Tyne was made, we bowled merrily and rapidly along, and passed through the clean-looking, wind-swept rural village of Tyne-linn just as its swarms of work-people were issuing from their houses, yawning and rubbing their eyes, preparatory to setting forth for another day's darg. What surprised us was the large number and the tender years of the younger workers—mere little boys and girls—who constituted by far the major part of this awakening army of labour. Fat, rosy, sturdy, well-clad, clever, bright looking little varlets they were though. But why were they in the yoke already. Surely the harsh harness of toil was being strapped

prematurely on those tender little shoulders. We were told it was the carrot thinning season, and that the poor parents of those children were, in these hard depressed times, constrained to augment the meagre weekly earnings of their several households by whatever their little ones could gather for this work—an employment for which, it was said, they were more suited than up-grown people. To this cruel apparent necessity we were bound on the spot reluctantly to acquiesce, although at the same time we could not well help thinking how much better it would have been both for the general community and the children themselves had the Fates permitted their attendance at school for a few years longer. Besides the culture of the carrot in this district, flower, goose and strawberry growing are likewise practised to some extent, and in these industries a good many youngsters are also engaged at this season. As we emerged from the village street into the open, Sam declared he believed this incipient town to be at once the most energetic and public-spirited place in the county, and one that was sure to expand and increase in importance in the future. The liberty and capital to feu and build, and the enterprise to start public works were only needed. The first, the coming land law reform measure would secure, and the capital and enterprise would surely follow suit. The natural advantages and resources of the town were as manifold as they were manifest, and its proximity to the sea and the railway would ensure their acceptance and development. But the place, he said, ought to be re-christened, and instead of “Tyne-linn” it should become known to all the world by the name of “Lin-toun.”

It was by the old road that we drove. On either hand—remember that our jaunt was taken during desperate “drouth”—on either hand we looked aslant upon the crops, shook our towsy heads, and silently breathed another fervid prayer for rain. We felt that speech was useless and inappropriate and therefore indulged, both of us, in a rare spell of voluntary sad and silent cogitation. But our two females behind fully made up for our transient taciturnity. They did ! The way that their two mature

tongues wagged simply defies description. All the news and all the gossip relative to all the hundreds of their friends and acquaintances within the four seas must have been overhauled and discounted during their drive. It was impossible to tell which of them had the best of it—so close, prolonged, and incessant was the double and terrible clatter! Presently, for a blessing, we trotted through another and smaller clachan, and then immediately were taken into the solemn embraces of the mighty woods. Alas! large, melancholy, gaping gaps in the woodlands showed where the Storm Fiend had been. The bulk of the remains of the forest fathers had disappeared, but huge, unsightly, up-canted roots still mournfully told of the woeful havoc. Alas, O Binning! thy glory is shorn, thy loss is irreparable for generations to come. It is still, however, quite evident in daylight that all the trees in this locality were not laid low by the blast of October 1881. We indubitably saw and renewed our acquaintance with not a few of the patriarchs of the grove who are happily “still to the fore.” And neither did these remaining worthies display any symptoms of either recent disaster or present weakness or decay; but proudly lifted aloft, as of old, unenfeebled and undiminished, their tossing crowns of summer glory and greenery. Indeed, on every hand and all around were apparent and palpable the manifold evidences of their yet good grip of existence and high prosperity. Away over in the parks and policies vast, dark, thundercloud-like masses of densest and the most superb foliage swayed and nodded slumberously in the heavy, hazy sunshine. “Oh, Dominie,” sang out Sam, breaking into extempore verse—

“ Oh to rove, an’ rave, an’ rane
Thro’ the woods o’ Tynninghame !—
A’ the live-lang summer day
Thro’ their benmaist bournes to stray ;
An’ never mair come sicht within
This weary world’s strife an sin !

Ay, Dominie, I never see Binnin’, but I think on a’ the puir toiling multitudes, an’ the swarms o’ pale, duddy bairns that are

cooped up, a' smeekeit, an' stunk, an' stewed like vermin in oor lairge towns an' cities. Had I the power, I wud tak' every soul o' them in my airms—dirty as they are—an' carry them out an' set them down here, whether they would or no'. In the good time which I see comin', a' this 'll be in the reach o' ilka ane. God hasten, oh hasten on that good time. Gee! Whup up auld Donal'. You drive, ye misbegotten nonentity. Gie me the reens."

Ere we were well out of the umbrageous forest we obtained a few exciting glimpses of the blue sea on our right, and soon afterwards we shot out into the open country again. This was the *ultima thule* of that segment of the county, and we were surprised and pleased to observe what fine crops it promised itself to reap by and bye. Here we halted and stabled our ancient Highland quadruped at the steading of a well-known farm near the mouth of the Peffer. For the purpose of having the long summer day all alone and undisturbed to ourselves, we had advisedly chosen as the scene of our "outing" this retired and out of the world corner—a veritable *terra incognita* to the ordinary tourist or holiday taker. In the carrying out of this laudable design, however, we were not disagreeably frustrated, as the sequel will show.

From the farm steading to the sea intervenes a distance of about a half of a Scotch mile—the path at first leading by the middle "headrig" of a large and vigorous looking potato field, and then over a series of "bents" or "links" of rolling knolls and sandbanks, luxuriantly mantled with the coarsest of sea-side herbage, and at intervals strewed with the broken-up hulls and the residue of the wreckage of the craft of other days. Beyond the bents, which are only about the fifth of a mile in breadth, the sea beach proper begins. This is where the wanton little brook called Peffer, after wandering sluggishly and dreamily for many miles by waving woods and fertile haughs and corn fields, finds at last an ampler home for itself in the roomy plains and

salt brine of the North Sea. The strip of coast—whereat the brook hides itself, and enters into its maritime inheritance—gracefully curves round the bay, which extends betwixt Whit-bury Point on the right and Seacliff on the left, and is locally known by the names of Peffer Sands and Scoll Rocks.

The sands stretch away south and east from the rocks. Both portions are nearly equal in length, and it is where they join and mingle together that Sam resolved to establish our headquarters for the day. A more desolate, secluded—if not repulsive—region could hardly be imagined. Whatever induced Mucklebackit to wile us from the warm busy world into such a naked woe-begone wilderness it would be difficult indeed to conjecture. In spite of the beautiful day and the brilliant sunshine, an air of dreary desolation and eerie, vacant, and unnameable mournful loneliness brooded over the scene, and would not depart from it. The sea was blue and calm, and barred and dappled with streaks and patches of shade and shine, but it did not matter. The eternal monotony of the splash-splash of the waves below, as they tumbled over and ran ashore, and then as quickly receded, produced in me a feeling of lassitude and weariness, and made me long to engage with Sam in some interesting converse. The pair of females had strayed away by themselves down amongst the rocks and boulders, and were now visible ploutering like two mermaids in the pools for molluscs. As they moved to and fro amidst the black rocks, they resembled the creations of a horrible nightmare, and made all my flesh creep.

Sam, unheeding them, lighted his pipe and flung himself prone on the green bent, ejaculating to himself ever and anon, between puffs—"magnificent!" "shooblime!" awfu'!" "What," I said, crouching down beside him—"What—what in the name of conscience or common sense is magnificent? A more gloomy utterly comfortless and deplorable desert I have not seen this many a day." "You," he returned with inimitable contempt, "You, wha cares what ye hae seen! You, a more dowflie,

forlorn, utterly stupid an' sand-blind numskull—I ha'ena' seen this mony a day. Rax me owre a pint o' Bass out o' the basket, and syne lie still. What an awfu' universe we live in! To lie up here an' look down on that heaving, restless living sea: and to wonder hoo it a' cam' there, an' whan an' what will be the end o't! And its living creatures—the slimy denizens o' the great deep—numberless—inconceivable—frae the monster Leviathan down to the tiniest Crustacean an' Coral. Oysters, limpets, mussels, partans, herring and haddies o' a' kinds, cods, skates, an' turbot, sturgeons an' fleecin' fish, sharks an' alligators, an' seals an' Polar bears. It's awfu'. That sea! Boundless it is to look at, but far mair unbounded is it in fact, an' grandeur, an' wonderment. An' yet, for a' that, it is only a portion o' the airth, an' the hail airth itsel' is but a speck, an insignificant needle-point in space—an atomy—a molecule—an ephemeral mote of dust, flickering for a day in the infinite an' eternal All. A forlorn, comfortless desert, ye say! Oh, Dominie—"

Just at this stage the impassioned ruminations of my friend were suddenly arrested by the furious barking of a dog, and, looking round, we beheld to our great surprise a large party of merry holiday folks perambulating the links close beside us. They proved to be an excursion party of common country people from the upper district of the county, and comprised many good specimens of the ordinary working class portion of our rural community—male and female—ploughmen, labourers, joiners, and blacksmiths, hinds' wives and servant girls, &c.

They had, it appeared, come down on a trip to the seaside in two long carts, which had been unyoked at Scoughall. As they came sauntering leisurely towards us, Sam and I recognised a few of them as old friends and acquaintances, particularly one of their number—the respected father of Sam's astonishing god-child, to wit, Jamie Horsman, the modest and unassuming, but able and astute farm-steward of Leddyslove. As soon as Jamie

noticed us, his large eyes and mouth opened to their utmost capacity with amazement, and a moment afterwards he ran forward, and shook us both vigorously by the hand. "The Lord preserve us a'," he cried; "Maister Mucklebackit an' Maister Pintail; of a' the folk in the warld, an' of a' the places in the warld, wha wad hae thocht it. To meet you twae here. I can hardly believe my een." In a few minutes, we were re-joined by the ladies, now returned from their whelk-hunting expedition, and directly an undisputed amalgamation of the two societies took place, and held good for the remainder of the day—by far the most interesting part of it. But the further history of the day must indeed be left for a fresh letter, for the record of what was said and done is too important to admit the curtailment of a single sentence.

F I F T H L E T T E R.

THE NEW ELECTORATE.

“Nor rural sights alone, but rural sounds,
Exhilarate the spirit, and restore
The tone of languid Nature.”

So sings the ever gentle, ever pleasing, and most lovable Cowper, haply anticipating the poor Dominie, now old and feeble, yet yearning with unspeakable eagerness to disclose to his impatient country, from an obscure and disreputable nook of the coast of East Lothian, what follows—yea,

“The grand debate,
The popular harangue, the tart reply,
The logic, and the wisdom, and the wit,
And the loud laugh—I long to tell them all;
I burn to set the imprisoned wranglers free,
And give them voice and utterance once again.”

These simple yet exquisite lines beautify, forecast, and depict my present and our late meeting at Peffer Sands. As I succinctly indicated in the last letter, the assimilation of the two parties was complete after the return of our two ancient females, “Nanny,” and “Tibbie,” from their inglorious crab and periwinkle hunting among the black “rocks,” and as it was by that time near noon, we all with one consent retired to a smooth level spot not far off, with all our baskets and hampers, for a general pitched and deliberate onslaught upon the bottles and provender which they contained—Mucklebackit and Horsman heroically

leading the van, the others following pell-mell, and the pains-taking Dominie encouraging the stragglers and bringing up the rear in a style peculiar to himself.

The baskets, boxes, hampers, craters, and parcels, were deposited, mixty-maxty, in one grand heap in the centre of the chosen scene of devastation, and after they had been all unpacked, and their appetising contents all disengulphed and made sensible to our longing sight, the whole assembly of us squatted down merrily around them. "Wha says ham?" immediately cried Sam, bending down on his knees with a large naked carving knife in his hand over a huge toily of boiled pork, as white and as fat as a hundred-weight of Yorkshire lard—"Wha says ham? Ane at a time. Here's a shave like a flag o' truce for My Nannie O. Dominie, mind the lasses. Boose about the porter—an' rax me athort a spaul o' that roasted cock." "Maister Mucklebackit," presently rifted out an old shepherd of the name of John Heatherbell, "I'll thank 'e for anither bit snack o' the ham. 'Od, its rale fine. Its no' owre lean. Just a wee bit snicky, Samil, just a wee bit snicky. I haena eaten as muckle sin' last Hansel Monday."

The July day, from a sky of unbroken azure, poured down upon us a bewildering and scorching flood of sunshine of tropical brilliancy and power, which was rendered only tolerable by reason of a quiet but steady breeze which was wafted simultaneously to us from the outspreading sea adjoining. We all panted and perspired copiously, but, notwithstanding, our appetites appeared worthy of the day, for truly our hunger and thirst seemed as extreme as the terrible heat. Whole baskets and hampers of sandwiches, tongues, rounds, and roasts, together with multitudinous bundles and stores of biscuits, and penny baps and scones, and sundry multifarious heaps of fruit and confectionery, quickly disappeared, and were seen no more. And with what a quantity of liquor were these toothsome edibles washed down. But in no single instance was there excess, or anything to mar

the harmony and merriment of our happy party. It was really a pleasure—a pure and unspeakable pleasure of the highest—to me to observe all those hard-working and industrious sons and daughters of the soil conduct themselves so sensibly, and yet so gleefully and joyously. They well might have shamed and put to the blush some picnic and excursion parties of far higher social and educational pretensions. And barring perhaps a slight tincturing of unintentional rudeness, or natural coarseness, their manners and general deportment were irreproachable also.

After the lusty and memorable collation, we had songs and toasts all round, which were provocative of the greatest fun, and a few of the richest peals of genuine laughter that it has ever been my happiness during the course of a long life to hear. To the songs and toasts succeeded a dance. As we had no fiddler, and I being past the period of tripping it on the light fantastic toe, Mucklebackit had the audacity to call upon me to “teedle” to the party. I, of course, demurred, and said I thought this demand upon me was outrageous, but he would take no denial, and I was therefore compelled to get up and make a merry Andrew of myself in broad day. As the performance was to be a “Scotch reel,” I resolved to put the desiderated mettle into their heels with an attempt at the tune of the “Highland Laddie.” A large flat greenstone boulder of about a ton in weight lay handy close by the scene of operations, and on this secure foundation I improvised an appropriate rostrum and mounted and began forthwith. All that I shall say in reference to this part of the day’s proceedings is assuredly very little.

My voice naturally is not of the nightingale order—to say the least—and now, what with feebleness and a host of cognate infirmities peculiar to old age, it is absolutely excruciating even to a fishwife when raised a single note higher than just an audible sing-song hum. Imagine then how it sounded, and creaked, and squeeled, and fizzed, and sputtered, and squirmed when in full blast and fury in my fond and wild endeavour to

give "music" to this energetic band of some ten or a dozen couples of agriculturists, all in the very flower and hey-day of life. It was a godsend there were so few spectators and listeners around.

The kittiwakes and seamews all disappeared, and I should expect them not to revisit that spot for some time to come. The dancers, however, despite both me and the intolerable heat, careered and held out wonderfully, and Mucklebackit, every time he came louping to my side, waved aloft his powerful arm, and vigorously exhorted me with speech and gesture to put forth my very best, and let them have it. The perspiration, accordingly, with the ecstatic and super-human efforts which I made to please him, streamed from me in a deluge, and my unparalleled exertions made my jawbones stound and ache like a lively young lumbago in a backward spring. At last they all jumped and reeled themselves literally out of breath, and had perforce to desist for sheer lack of physical ability further to prolong their wild antics. Upon the bents they flung themselves headlong, exhausted, half melted, and elemented, where they lay speechless and dissolved, and dripped, like heaps of sheep skins on the floor of a tannery, for the next half-hour. At length Sam aroused himself, and shouted out, "Jamie Horsman, we'll dance nae mair the day. Dancing is the madness of bedlamities in such a heat as this is. Sae let us a' sit still, an' sing, an crack. Jean" (Mrs Horsman) "hoo's my little Sammy?" (the son of Jamie and Jean Horsman, and Mucklebackit's name-child). "What for is the young hero no' here? I'm gaun to send his Stuart kilt an' feather next week. Busk him in them, Jean, an' never such anither fowr-year-auld Gilderoy ever blessed a Scottish god father's e'e. Never. In twenty years hence we'll ha'e him returned as Member o' Parliament for his native county."

These half-serious, half-humorous sentences of Sam's, which were made to be understood by the whole company, incited the male members of it to instant political conversation and debate,

and immediately the prospects of the rival Parliamentary candidates of the county were canvassed and discussed all round with astonishing interest and ability. Now is the time, I bethought me, now is the glorious and longed for opportunity afforded you, Dominic, for exploring and making manifest of what stuff the "New Electorate" is really made. Adroitly perceiving this with my usual and characteristic alacrity, I at once bawled over to Horsman to know what he thought of the situation? "Oh I dinna ken, sir," he replied, cautiously, "I haena thocht very much about it yet." "It will be a deid heat;" interjected Tam Coom, the blacksmith. "Haldane wad haul down the Kirk, but the Kirk 'ill maybe haul down Haldane." "That canna be," cannily put in Willie Sawyer, the joiner, "Ye canna haul down what never has been up. Mr Haldane is only yet trying to get up." "An' he sall geet ma vote;" cried "Heather Jock," the shepherd frae Muirhill, "Kirk or nae Kirk, nae Tory for me. Wha gied us the vote? Wes it no' the Leeberals? an' sall we thanklessly an' treacherously use their ain gift to ding them down noo? Get awae. Lat the working men stick to their true freends, an' lat the Kirk fend for itself. Nae fear o' the Kirk." "No, nae fear for the Kirk," answered Sandy Briggs, the roadman—a U.P.—"but for the establichment o't? It's a standing injustice to twa-thurds o' the country. Endow us a', or nane ava. Lat us a' be aigual." "Than gang a' to the Auld Kirk," retorted Jenny Geddes, a smart, gashlooking, hind's wife. "That's oot o' the question, Jenny ma wumman," rejoined Sandy. "An' besides ye ken, Jenny, though a' the Presbyterians war to do sae, there wad still be the Episcopawlians, an' the Roman Catholics, an' ithers. We want aigual justice an' richts, an' privileges for a' alike, an' the best plan is just to disestablich an' gie a' the bairns free education, and nae wrang to the Kirk either. The thing's as plain as a bing o' stanes."

"Its just a' fules' havers!" broke in here a middle aged ploughman—Peter Greenfield by name—who had hitherto sat stolidly and silently, eyeing the speakers aslant, "What guid

wull a vote dae to huz? It'll naither pit a shullin' intae your pooch nor mine. If they had gien us a hauf-day every Seterday like other fowk, it wad been wicer like. That wad been something. A vote; what's a vote? Ca!" "Hoot awae," cried Jenny Geddes, "what do ye think yersel'?" My conscience, but ye sanna get aff sae easy. Na! sae stand forrit on the bit, an tell us belyve what ye think o' the bruilzie. As they say at yer club, I ca' upo' you an your freend Samil to sum up the debate." "I beg to second that," laughed Jamie Horsman, "for I believe that the lead o' you twa will be followed by the best feck o' the ferm folk in East Loudon." Thus urged, and so save further bother, I at once sprawled to my feet and briefly said—

"Ladies and gentlemen, you have unfortunately called upon me at a time when it is physically out of my power to speak two sentences consecutively. I cannot do what you wish. I believe I have dislocated or otherwise damaged the organism of my jaws with my late musical effort. Therefore, with this apology, I will simply call upon Samuel himself to take my place, and resume my seat in the background. We are, politically, much-and-much alike." "What?" cried the astonished Oracle, bounding to his feet. "What; politically alike—you an' me? I never deem it worth while to contradict or thwart him, but with regard to our coming election, and the chances of the opposing candidates, I have listened to your several opinions with the greatest interest, for I believe it will depend largely upon the rural vote how the contest is decided. If you are, as I suppose, Liberals—that is, if you are believers in the principles of progressive action being applied to the legislation and government of your country more surely and more thoroughly by them than you think the Tory party would be either willing or capable of applying those principles—then it is evident for whom you must vote, if you vote manfully and conscientiously. To do aught otherwise, no matter for what reason, would at once be unmanly and stupid. You are now the responsible citizens of your country, and each of you must act at the polling booth as if the destiny of the

whole empire depended upon your individual vote. You must not suppose, like poor Mr Greenfield, that it is all 'fool's havers,' or that it does not matter. It matters far more than I can express, and he is not worthy of the name of Briton—he is not worthy of the name of man, who does not recognise in the franchise the highest and most sacred trust ever put into his hands, and who does not religiously resolve to exercise it conscientiously and courageously. If your minds are not yet made up, so much the better ; take time. The programmes by the leaders of both parties will shortly be laid before us, and then it will evidently be our duty to read the newspapers, and try to understand them, and afterwards to decide calmly and sincerely, and vote accordingly. Some say there is to be a difficulty with regard to the Church. I am as sincere a well-wisher of the Kirk as any of you, but it will be no obstacle to me, because I believe that it can never be disestablished before it has been made a test question, and placed before all others at the bar of the whole country—the polling-booth. If that be done at the impending election—which I do not expect—but if it be done, my course is clear ; I am for religious equality, as a simple measure of right and justice to each and all. But as I think there are more important questions than even the Church one, calling urgently for settlement, I would very willingly let the subject of the proposed disestablishment of the Kirk ripen and lie over till the others are disposed of." On the motion of Sawyer, the joiner, a hearty vote of thanks was accorded Sam for his unusually serious but invaluable address.

SIXTH LETTER.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL.

Telegrams! telegrams!! telegrams!!! Truly it never rains but it pours. If, in this country, we have a drought—the earth cracks, we *do* have it, and *vice versa*. I was born in an evil hour. I am a pattern of a man who, above all things, loves slow-going, and comfort, and quiet—notwithstanding what innumerable busy-bodies may insinuate or aver to the contrary. And to be tormented and pestered as I have been for the last two weeks with all those confounded bundles and bunches of letters and telegrams! It would turn the brain of a Dutchman. But in my case, I confess, the torment absolutely grew beyond my capacity of *tholing*. So, as at any rate my ripe corn was all cut, I manfully resolved to illustrate again practically the admirable maxim that discretion out of all question is the better part of valour, and fly for a time the scene of the struggle which was rapidly making a ghost of me. Accordingly, I propounded some paltry story to Agnes by way of excuse, and then slipped out to the stable, and yoked old Donald into the gig, and skedadled instantler. But as I was jogging nicely down the entry, slyly chuckling to myself over the apparent success of my politic *ruse*, I was abruptly waylaid, on turning the corner, by a certain too well-known imp of darkness, a boy on a pony, who, as soon as I became cognisant to his keen young optics, held up his hand as if to arrest me, and then gleefully and discordantly shouted at his loudest—

“Maister Pintail; stop, Mr Pintail; aw hiv a tailygram

for 'e." The British law of assault and battery must never either be assaulted or battered by the respectable and responsible Dominic, else—— The boy, therefore, is not buried yet. But the message—the infernal "tailygraum"—the well-known slip of flimsy paper direct from the Post Office. Ah! *It* never was read, and never more will be, for I rent it violently on the spot into ten thousand shreds and fractions, and then instantly whipped up Donald, and left the imp sitting on horseback in the middle of the road, a perfect patent monument of speechless horror and amazement. Telegrams! I dreaded even driving on, for I was taking a course which brought me every step nearer the railway, where those naked telegraph wires are night and day to be seen extended from pole to pole, like the very twanging and trembling nerve fibres of Pandemonium itself. But I daringly ventured forward, for I had a noble purpose in view.

After an interval of half an hour or so, I quieted down considerably, and succeeded in regaining reason, and my usual equanimity and urbanity before I had well passed the mill. At that point, I began to look around me in my ordinary suave and composed style. On all sides were to be seen the newly-stocked fields. And all about me also the now familiar whirr and rattle of the modern harvester was still heard like the song universal—the chant triumphant—that was alone tolerable in the land—for all other sounds and voices were silenced or hidden by this ubiquitous pæon of the season, and of this our mechanical epoch—the Age on Wheels. In the hollow beyond the smiddy the clamour was absolutely perplexing, and vividly recalled to my mind a stanza of Mucklebackit's boyish song on the same subject—

"Wi' a birr an' a whirr, awa, awa,
 Wi' a birr an' a whirr, awa, awa,
 Owre rigg an' fur we ca' we ca',
 Wi' a birr an' a whirr, awa, awa ;
 Nae hooks are noo, awa, awa,
 But muckle machines hae a', hae a'.
 An' blue look th' grey coats frae Armagh
 At oor birr an' oor whirr, awa, awa."

The crops, speaking generally, appeared somewhat dwarfed. They wanted—it seemed to me, as a whole—more of them. Perchance the extra quality of the wheat and barley will square matters. Perchance! Imperceptibly I was drifting again into the slough of nervous irritability and low spirits, and beginning to regret that my span of life had been dwindled out into such an unconscionable length. The poor modern Methuselah! If my brother, the Wandering Jew, and I ever foregather, I mused, what would be thought of us? That was a question I dared not ponder. And so again I plucked up the reins, and urged Donald forward faster and faster. The cross-roads, the ash tree, and the wood and the craig were all passed in a hurricane of speed and distraction. I was like Jonah of old—trying to fly from myself; and ere the crown of the brae which overlooks the clachan was surmounted, the pony was exhausted, and I had to let him walk down. Before I was at all aware, we were passing under the railway bridge, above which the telegraph wires were humming and bummung away in full song and symphony. I started at their dreaded melody as if I had been caught up in their meshes, and had received from them an excruciating electric shock. In less time than even a telegraphist would believe, I was at the door of the inn giving hasty directions to the ostler anent the stabling and feeding of Donald. He was at home—the man of the inn. I absorbed more raw spirits in five minutes that day than I had done for whole years previously. Immediately afterwards, I bent my aged steps for Mucklebackit's straight. He also was at home, I was informed, and in his sanctum.

"Come in!" he cried when I had tapped at the door, and in straightway I went, and found him sitting in his high chair reading—a—a—angels and ministers of grace—a telegram! "Oh Sam!" I yelled in a tone of superlative apprehension and distress. "What *is that*! Put it away, oh put it away, dear Sam—do." "What is the matter, I don't understand you!" he cried, rising hurriedly. "Is onything wrang—Nanny?" "Never mind," I returned, picking up the miserable telegraphic despatch

which he had laid aside on my entrance, "Is it read? is it answered?" "Yes." "Then kindly allow me, Sam," I said, thrusting viciously the offending missive between the bars of the grate. "Oh Mucklebackit, I am literally done for—unnerved—unhinged—and disconsolate and distraught beyond remedy!" "Sit down," he replied soothingly, "an' tell me what it is. I trust—wi' an anxiety as great an' as deep as your ain—I hope its no Nanny? Tell me quick!" "Sam, no, it is not Agnes. She is well and hearty—thank God." "Then, ye auld drivelling antediluvian ass, what is it?" he demanded, kindling up impatiently and furiously. "Nae mair mystical palavers wi' me, I say. Out with it, at once." "Yes, yes, Sam," I rejoined, beginning strangely to quieten down the more I noticed him blazing up!

"Yes, dear Sam, Agnes is well—content yourself. It is those unutterable, insidious, and disturbing telegrams. Do you get them too? By me they are insupportable. And yet every friend and every enemy I have got on this earth, who resides a gun-shot beyond the radius of Bluebraes, seems resolved to present me with a sample of them. What can I do to prevent the further inlet of these obnoxious visitants—the wreckers of my health, the worry of my old age—the accursed disturbers and destroyers of my ease and tranquility! I have come to you, Sam, as my oldest and best friend, I have flown to you to seek your valued advice—to ask you to assist me, and to tell me what you think I ought to do. For if they be not stopped, and stopped at once, I verily believe the sable plumes of my hearse will be seen coming down your street before a month is over. You know, I told you about that unfortunate transaction in Glasgow? Well, anent *that*, two weeks ago the telegrams began to drop in intermittently, night and day—although harvest was begun. Then there was the price of the hay to settle with the Leith merchant, and nothing would serve him else than sending me a whole long array of them about *that*. Next, poor Agnes was laid up for a few days with a swollen tongue, occasioned, I

surmise, by her somewhat imprudent and extraordinary linguistic performances in the part she took in the interminable "auld wife's clatter" with your Tibbie during our late successful trip to the seaside in our own dogcart. My son and daughter, who are married and settled (as you are aware) in Edinburgh and Glasgow respectively, both somehow heard of this illness, and instantly began of course to operate on the wires also, and in a short time they peppered me to the extent of even two and three messages a-day a-piece. Had the swelling not quickly abated I was a doomed man—clearly. But Doctor Gordon soon released us (so far as she was concerned at any rate) by an ample and skilful application of oatmeal porridge and fresh lard to the distempered larynx. For a day or two after this, the despatches began visibly to lessen, and I fondly hoped in my innocence that the brunt of the pestiferous blast had passed. Foolish, foolish old man. Sam, will you credit it? the storm is renewed worse than ever. Even this very day I have been made the demented recipient of no less than three more of the detested plagues—one of them all the way from New York."

"Good gracious!" laughed Sam, "what's it about, Dominie, at all?" "About. It is about me—it is about you. The inquisitive operator in New York demands to know, per return of cable, if the rumour is true that you are to publish a new book? Such a report, he says, is quite current in all the large cities of the Union. My instant and laconic answer to the curious Yankee was one word—*certainly!* But what the result of it will be, brief as it was, I tremble to conjecture. I fear you may look out, Sam, for no less than an order for a half of the first edition. Strangely, but yet naturally, the other telegrams of the last day or two—all those I have read—have had their origin in the same cause. I say 'naturally' advisedly, Sam." "Why, Dominie? I am not sure if I follow you. Unravel, unravel." "I will, as often as I have heard you say Sam, in five flashes. I have received a large sheaf of telegrams, from both near and distant correspondents, and from all the four cor-

ners of the country—Balmoral included—the good half of them seeking to know if I am mixed up with your publication, and the remainder as anxiously enquiring who or what the deuce am I? It seems that all these benighted or mystified telegraphists cannot bottom the Old Dominie at all, and hence their consuming anxiety and curiosity on the subject. What am I to do? Suggest me a way out of my deplorable fix, Samuel, if you can. I cannot survive much longer, I am persuaded, this terrific deluge of despatches. I have written, and rewritten, to Mr Raikes—but all to no effect. He is powerless in the matter. Of course, Sam, your countrymen have no difficulty with you—every man and mother's son know Mucklebackit, his birth, his boyhood, and the marvellous deeds of his riper years are more familiar in their mouths than their parritch spoons. But of me they know only enough to awaken their curiosity, and to create in them a craving to learn more. What do you think Sam?"

"Hemm; hemm;" he mused, "its raither a ticklish quandary, naedoot. Pass your snuffbox. Let me see, let me see. (Ha-chee! ha-chee! Confound that snuff! I would gie my aith the feck o't's mercury.) The chieils wha are threshin' the last shaird o' life out o' ye wi' their multitudinous epistolary an' telegraphic queries evidently ken a guid swatch o' yer history already, an' aiblins the easiest method to quaten them a'thegither wad be to gie them the hail o't? I have had an inklin' o' this before mysel', for I hae aften been bathered wi' fouk speerin' about ye. An' the feint ane o' me could satisfy them either, for the guid reason that it was abune my power to do sae. I ken literally nocht about ye Dominie—your early history, I mean. For wha ye are, what ye are, or whare ye cam' frae, are three hooly questions as dark an' as inscrutable to the saul of Sam Mucklebackit as the origin an' minority o' Clootie himsel'. Sin' the time whan I used to writhe aneath your lang tawse at the schule, nae doubt I hae gotten a wee when glimpses o' mair or less extent o' some portions o' yer existence—but the beginnin' o't, an' a' the lave o't, are just as blank an' as unknown as the

black core o' chaos to me." "You have your own self to blame for this," I pleaded, "you have never asked to be informed, Sam."

"True, Dominie, vera true. But can ye really mind as far back as your youth?" "No doubt," I answered readily, "that is, as far back as the public rejoicings for the great victory of Trafalgar. "What! Dominie! Trafalgar!! Do I really see before me with the eye of flesh, and being clothed, and in my right mind—do I really see—what of course, is only a vestige of a man—but do I really look upon a living man-relic of that epoch of almost misty antiquity? Trafalgar! Prodigious! Prodigious, indeed—three times prodigious. Tra—fal—gar! The little living frog that was lately disinterred from the heart of an eight ton whinstone boulder, which was quarried out of the middle of a seam of coal in an eighty-fathom-deep mine in West Lothian, is no more than thy rival in interest to me. Indeed, not so much; for the frog lacks proof, but there thou art. Tell me, O Dominie, disclose to me the enthralling story of thy earliest time—if happily so be it that an expressible recollection of it be still extant in that wonderful assortment of crumbling bone and parchment which thou callest thy skull?" "Sam," I broke in, laughing before he had half done, "Sam, I don't know how it is—but so it is—when I first came in here to-night I felt all over miserable. My old heart seemed to have become a veritable cauldron of unrest, and woe, and trouble. And now, such is the magic and cheering influence of your gracious and mirth-provoking presence and company, I am already, as it were, renovated throughout, my dejection is fled or flying me fast, and altogether I feel as if the old life-blood of my youth was streaming and bounding in full tide through this withered and shrunken frame once more. God bless you, Sam." "All right, my patriarch," he replied feelingly. "Don't mention it. But I am in earnest—I never was more so. I have this night to spare, and I want to hear your account of yourself—your autobiography, in fact, up to the time when I knew you

first as the tenant of Blaebraes." "And you shall have it," I declared warmly, "if for no other reason than as a partial acknowledgment of your invaluable instrumentality and services to me this evening."

So saying, we each of us drew our chair nearer the fire; for the autumn air, even in the cosy sanctum, felt already shrewd and snelly, and after Sam had re-filled and lighted his enormous meerschaum, and I had re-primed my Wellingtonian nasal organ with a full charge of Prince's mixture, we nodded to each other and then I coughed, and began forthwith the unfolding of my extraordinary narrative.

In the somewhat chilly autumn evening we hob-nobbed, as only old friends can do, over the cosy sanctum hearth together—Sam and I, alone. He appeared most anxious to hear my eventful story, and I was as eager to begin, for I dreaded as the plague a relapse of my late bitter recollections. Nothing is so propitious as idleness to sadness. This I had proved tens of thousands of times previously, and, therefore, immediately, and with an heroic effort, I launched myself back into my early years and began as follows:—Like yourself, Sam, I am entirely one of the people—I belong to the people, am a son of the people, and a very old man of the people also.

My ancient but ignoble blood
Has crept through scoundrels ever since the flood.

I was born, Sam, I really don't know where, but I was ejected from the unknown into this earthly scene of perplexing affairs in one of the decades of the last century—probably in the last or the immediately preceding decade. No baptismal record, no parish register notification, nor even a homely excerpt from the fly-leaf of the old Ha' Bible, can be laid hands on and brought forth as evidence indubitable of the exact decade of my earthly advent. My father was a flying tailor, and my mother a flying washerwoman, in the merry town o' Trarant. They are both dead

now. They both died before Robert Burns. Bold John Barley-corn early tripped up the restless heels of my erratic father, and his loving spouse, my poor mother, fell over him and never rose again. Peace—peace to their ashes. I never had the faintest recollection of either of them, albeit I was their 'ae an' only bairn. After the deplorable collapse of my earthly authors, I was left to tend and fend for myself, which at first I did by herding black cattle for the farmer of Southfield on Glad's Muir, and afterwards for the then tenant of Beanston on Beanston Muir—on the north bank of the Tyne, between the county town and Linton—which was all fenceless and totally unenclosed in those days. Anent those far back early years I remember very little, and absolutely nothing worth recording. My first vivid reminiscence, as previously mentioned, relates to Nelson's crowning victory of Trafalgar, which made the village people for the space of a week delirious with delight and the drinking of seas of home-brewed ale to his immortal memory. And shortly after this, Sam, I remember going with crowds of other people to the top of the Law, for the purpose of verifying or falsifying for ourselves a rumour which was then current that the French ships, with the threatened army of invasion on board were straightway making for Leith Roads. Nothing was too absurd for the fear and credulity of those terrible times. I chiefly recollect the Law excursion, however, from the painful fact that I had the mischance to lose my new blue Scotch bonnet there, and consequently had to find my way back Beanstonwards like a bareheaded savage. I have a vague idea still, also, that the bulk of the population in these parts at that period were of, or were in some way or other connected with the red-coated profession of arms. Every other man was either of the militant military itself, or belonged to one or other of the numerous militia corps garrisoned or barracked in the district. The great post road swarmed with them at all times, night and day.

After leaving my old master at Beanston, with whom I served some years, I filled the arduous post of lademan, or

millers' carter, at a grinding mill on the Tyne a little below Haddington. I was alone in the world, Sam, a wanderer, an alien, a stray waif, and barring an uncle, who was supposed to be still in life and sojourning in foreign parts, had not a single relative to the fore. By my old master I had been sent for a month or two during the nights of three winters to school, where I picked up the means to improve myself—*i.e.*, learnt to read and write a little, and these means constituted the sum total of all the academical assistance I ever received. My progress literary wise, however, was rapid—I was capable actually to slowly read aloud (to myself), in an old nameless and dateless portion of a newspaper, an original account of the “Bloody Battle of Waterloo,” within even less than nine months after it was fought. I was my own preceptor, and this one fact explains my progress. The afore-mentioned old ragged bit of a paper, a tattered, boardless Bible, and half a dozen well-thumbed, dog-eared penny chap books, and Belfast almanacks, comprised for some years my entire valuable library. During this great educational period, I had also succeeded in filling a half stocking foot with my saved earnings. I therefore advisedly forsook the service of the millmaster, bought an apology for a horse, and another one for a cart, for an old song, and started instantly on my own account as public carrier between this village and Edinburgh. In this new and aristocratic profession I succeeded, so that my highest anticipations were soon laughed at and forgotten. My stores of knowledge and book-learning were, besides, immensely increased by my weekly journeys into the Modern Athens.

I got all sorts of literature at the old book shops in the old town for the asking almost. In the district my learning soon became so well-known that, when the schoolmaster of a neighbouring clachan suddenly succumbed, I was called by the unanimous voice of the whole country side to become his successor—which I did. My school was not the parish one of the district, as you are aware, only an offshoot of it—the

main establishment being distant about a mile and a bittock. My schoolroom itself was a couple of old outhouses knocked into one building by simply driving a six feet square aperture through the gable which formerly divided them, and boarding up one of the doorways. When I first began my professional labours in this venerable institution, I possessed as raw material the "harns" inside the craniums of four boys and three girls, all country urchins, and the whole of them about six years of age a-piece. One of those little girls afterwards in due time became my most able and efficient better half—my truly adorable Agnes. "Indomitable Nanny!" shouted Sam, sympathetically and with stentorian virr and energy. "How did ye court her? How was she won? I die to hear how ye woo'd and won such a woman of women. As Jonathan has it, 'Hurry up, right away, Kerslap!'" "Yes," I returned, "but everything in its own place, Sam.

During my first session the little students increased to over sixty, and ere my third terminated, I had one hundred and fifty on my regular roll—all taught by myself, and all paying me one 'common fee of twopence each a week. My system was simplicity itself. Lessons all learned to a word—or! Corporal chastisement was the universal method for ensuring diligence. My scholars had got to learn, and they knew it—and did it. My inflexible manner was known far and wide, hence the parents of delicate or extra dull children invariably gave me a wide berth, and none other than the robust and capable entered this hard world through my iron portal. My success was complete and everywhere acknowledged.

Years prior to my resignation, my Academy was filled to overflowing daily with two different sets of learners—from 9 A.M. to 4 or 5 P.M. with the usual promiscuous assemblage of juveniles attending a country school, and from 7 to 9 or 10 P.M. with a sturdy tumbling batch of young ploughmen and others from the adjoining hamlets and farms around. The one reason I believe of my extreme popularity was my success as a teacher of the

robust porridge fed country lads and lasses. Many of those urchins became learned prodigies under the quickening and never-failing influence of my dreaded 'tawse.' And I somehow had a way of making even the children themselves perceive that the inflicting of physical punishment was painful in the extreme to me, and that I only had recourse to it for their own benefit. I drop you these professional remarks, Sam, just by the way, for the obvious consideration of the dominies of the present day.

After cultivating this human nursery and teaching the young idea how to shoot for full sixteen weary years—with a comfortable amount of profit withal—I at last determined for divers urgent and weighty reasons to relinquish it, and renounce for ever my charge of this intellectual vineyard, and to cast about for another in the agricultural world, and, in short, go in for farming during the remainder of my long lease upon this earth. Twice weekly, when officiating as public carrier of the district, I had to pass at a distance the sombrous and bleak-looking farm and steading of Blaebraes, on the desolate estate of the Right Hon. Lord Glum of Barehall, then tenanted by a Mr John—or more familiarly "Jock"—Towzler, a reckless spendthrift, and trafficker in fighting cocks, baiting bull-dogs, badgers, and racehorses. From the very first, this dilapidated, yet—in a style of its own—picturesque, and exceedingly moderately-rented farm, took by storm my fancy. I gazed at it always with eager, and I confess, with longing and covetous eyes. Ere long, therefore, as I grew big and prosperous in the world, I resolved and solemnly made a vow within myself, never to rest or relax one jot my earnest and frugal ways and habits, until I had attained the secret object of my daring ambition, and become the proud occupier and tenant of it. Many long and laborious years, crammed full of sore troubles, sorrows, difficulties, and disappointment, Sam, I knew well I would have to plod, plan, and struggle through, before I came within even a distant sight of the happy goal of all my desires. But I was in those days a man of the

stamp that can wait—one who could resolutely will to work on silently and wait. Such a man, Mucklebackit, given health, can accomplish anything. Why do you frown so?" "Dominie, had you been gifted with reflective powers equal to your others, ye would have been a great genius. Ye lack only reason—high judgment I mean, for your worldly ratiocination is indubitably over the average. I never held you in so much estimation as I do this moment." "Oh, Sam! the old pedantic and polemic Dominie is already a sad egotist—and there you are, doing your utmost to puff and wind him up in his own conceit larger and more absurd than ever. But, to resume. The full tide of opportunity (after, you know, keeping school for sixteen years) had suddenly swollen and flooded to my very feet. Will you credit it Samuel? I was accepted of my peerless and beloved Agnes. The spendthrift farmer of bonny Blaebraes became a fled bankrupt, and my Lord Glum's big burly factor advertised for a tenant for the farm, for which I offered myself at 20 per cent. under poor Mr Towzler, and was at once thankfully embraced. That makes you gape. Of course, I will explain how it all fell out, and the story, take my word for it, will be worth the hearing. Fill your pipe."

S E V E N T H L E T T E R.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL—"WOO'D AND MARRIED AND A'."

At this point of my life story, Sam, my solitary interlocutor, and I were abruptly disturbed by the unannounced entrance of "Tibbie," mindfully inquiring, "Did we no' want a bite o' something?" "She had the buttock o' the last goudy cheese still i' the press, and it, wi' a chack o' white bread an' a mouthfu' o' ale, wad maybe pit us owre a' nicht." "Tibb," says Sam, with a greedy look in his eye, and his mouth watering, "Tibb, my love, we want to be left alone; but I daresay ye may bring ben the bread and ale, just for the look o' the thing. The gabbie auld Dominie is enow on the eve o' his weddin' in his crack—sae the bap an' the goudy we'll in fancy gar stand for the marriage feast. No words, dearie. Hurry up." On her almost instant return with the viands and a large stone jar, we sat us both down at the table and partook. Tibbie mended and renewed the fire, and tidied up the snuggery, and then bade us guid evening, and left us for good. Before I had finished my diminutive half slice, "Drink, Dominie," said Mucklebackit in his ordinary indifferent way, pouring out a large bicker of reaming ale from the earthenware jar. "Ye maun surely be thirsty after the concoction and emission o' that dry, lang-winded yarn. But hist ye—hist ye up. Hoo did ye woo an' win your Nanny? Such a woman?" I must begin at the beginning," I replied, returning the empty bicker. "Don't disturb me, Sam, please, and I will make my recital as lucid and as succinet as it is within my now-enfeebled capacity to do. Well, then, as I told you before your late 'marriage feast,' Agnes was put under my tuition in my rural

academy as a scholar at the age of six. The little minx from the very beginning evinced a decided strong-mindedness and individuality of character. She also (somewhat strangely) simultaneously with doing so, became my pet and favourite pupil. To quote a verse of your own, Sam, upon a similar subject—

‘ Like a common flower she was
A simple fact of every day,
No queenly grace of form or face,
And yet—how charming in her way.’

To me, indeed, she never was a *common flower*, and I doubt if ever externally she appeared so to many others. Need I say that she soon overtook and distanced scholars twice her age? She has been a paragon ever since she left the cradle. She was equally and remarkably capable with head, tongue, and hands. Her extraordinary lingual endowments (I am sorry to say) can be proven even now. They remain as full and as unimpaired and as energetic as ever. She can still, when in temper, audibly and successfully maintain her ground against all comers—be they male or be they female.

At the green age of fifteen (the usually ‘green’ age I mean, for in her case such an adjective could never with propriety be applied), at fifteen she left my school for good, and carried off my heart—holus-bolus—along with her. Sam, whether you credit it or not, I tell you that, when Agnes left school, I felt, (of course I didn’t know why at the time) as *outré*, as amazed, and as forlorn as a forty-year wanderer returned to his native village may be supposed to be on finding the old scene, the same outwardly indeed, but with all old friends departed, and a new race of unfamiliar strangers filling their places. My love was as true and pure and sincere as that of a saint, but it was there unknown to me. I could not eat, I could not sleep, I literally pined away. My school became to me a prison—a haunt of agonising memories, in which I alternately wept, and sighed, and languished, and from which I longed with my whole soul to escape. To quote you again—

‘ Life’s flood ran on its weary course ;
 Day after day athwart me row’d,
 Time seemed still to augment the force
 Of that great grief which o’er me flowed.’

Her father was a small farmer, immersed in debt and difficulties, a ‘broken-down’ man — a widower with a small family, my divinity being eldest—and rapidly and visibly tending, poor fellow, away fast to the ‘Land o’ the Leal,’ whither his ‘Jean’ had preceded him some years. Thus it was that Agnes was taken from school and retained altogether at home—to be the care-taker and mistress of her father’s household, and to become as best she might, a second mother to his helpless children. And most nobly and devotedly, Sam, did my peerless princess take up and fulfil this sacred filial duty—God bless her for it. You knew the old man’s place?” “No, it wasna Sprotland?” “Yes, the very same. From the schoolhouse it would lie apart about a couple of miles—a dismal road, over lonely, rugged braes, which were then all common moss and moor.

Along this dreary, forlorn track, Sam, I twice weekly, fair weather or foul, distractedly trudged for years—ostensibly to inquire after the health of, and enjoy an hour’s society, with ‘Auld Ritchie,’ but in reality for no other reason than to fill up my yearning, aching soul with the divine vision and presence of my indefatigable goddess as she flew rampaging about the house at her work, or deftly spanked and bundled the younger children off to bed. Every Tuesday and Friday after school hours I would invariably set off on this love-lorn mission to Sprotland, crooning happily as I paced along some characteristic extempore parody of mine, such as this—

‘ Oot owre yon braes, whaur Tyne deep flows
 Thro’ wuds an’ ploo’d fields canny, O ;
 The bairns rin wild—the schule is closed—
 And I am off to Nanny, O.’ &c.

By-and-bye the children at Sprotland grew up into striplings,

and were severally dispatched to 'service' or 'trades.' The much-suffering old man died suddenly within a week after creating me by his last testament his sole executor, and the liquidator likewise of the hopelessly bewildered muddle of his mundane affairs. At my earnest and disinterested solicitation, Agnes and her elder brother agreed at once to the renunciation of the lease of the farm. Thereafter, with really astonishing skill and alacrity, I discharged all the claims against the estate to the last farthing, and effected a clearance and a complete redment of the financial and professional matters within six months of the testator's decease—and had my hands washed.

These sad circumstances, of course Sam, compelled my high-souled but unfortunate empress ultimately to abdicate and vacate the once happy scene of her supreme rule. Then the all-absorbing question to each of us became—where was she to go? Where could the orphan, where could the poor, homeless lassie find a refuge? With one poor exception, she had not a surviving friend that could shelter her even for a week. Hers was a case, Mucklebackit, that might have moved her stoniest hearted enemy (supposing she had enemies), and so I leave you to imagine how I, her enthralled lover and devoted worshipper, felt over it. The only living relative or friend she had who, even for the shortest space, could possibly have afforded her a resting place, was an old (about thirty), miserly, disappointed maiden aunt, who for some years had resided by herself in a large house in the village. But then the two detested each other. However, by my reiterated assurances and counsels, the couple were both at last persuaded to draw together. Agnes consented only after she was convinced that there was really no other outlet or alternative remaining for her. Of course, I was the go-between and the politic negotiator for both maidens. The crabbed, jealous spinster aunt (as I knew well) was of a temper and disposition not dissimilar to those of my adored; and was indeed, like my own Cleopatra, a bit of a shrew and termagant also. Just as I desired, so it all came to pass!

As I had foreseen, the high-mettled couple were not many days together under the same riggin' before they were at daggers drawn. Of course these contentions brought affairs quickly to a crisis. I foresaw that they would, and therefore quite confidently and deliberately watched and waited my opportunity. When it came, I clearly and boldly one evening (it was the ides of March, Sam,) pushed forward, and heroically delivered to my soul's idol the all important question—and was accepted without one moment's hesitation. As I was the senior of my affianced—say, two score years—the loving Amazon for once yielded willingly to another's will, and graciously permitted even me to name the happy day for the celebration of our projected espousals as, arm in arm, and now publicly linked together for life, we fondly sauntered by ourselves along the sunny banks of the Tyne. Sam! I know the very inch and spot of ground to this day whereon she stood when she looked up into my face, and then blushing said 'Yes!' Oh, the unspeakable rapture of that hour! I visit the hallowed scene of our blessed betrothal regularly every year at the ides of March. The last time I was there I was so moved with the flood of my fond recollections that I had to take out my pencil and jot the following down on the bit to unburden and relieve my oppressed heart:—

By thee, dear Tyne, again by thee
 I stray where aft I wont to stray,
 When youthfu' Nanny roam'd wi' me,
 By boskie bauk an' breerie brae!
 Weel, weel I lo'e thee, bonnie Tyne,
 O I will lo'e thee till I dee!
 The bands o' love did first entwine
 My willing heart, lang syne, by thee!

Here is the scene—the bonnie bower,
 Where first-love's posie fragrant grew!
 The bonnie bower, wherein my flower—
 That precious posie—I did pu'!
 The tears o' age now dim my c'e,
 When I my early time reca',
 The stang an' stound o' memorie,
 Is aye—thae days are wede awa'!

But I will lo'e thee, bonnie Tyne,
O I will lo'e thee till I dee !
The bands o' love did first entwine
My willing heart, sweet stream, by thee !

I was then a youth of only about sixty, or seventy-five at the most. Well, the grand, auspicious marriage day at length dawned and wore on, we were united in the guid auld Scotch fashion ; but more than that about it I am not going to say—it isn't worth while. The honeymoon we passed decently in our own house, and amidst the quiet scenes of our own native valley.

I am anxious to press on, and to give you the other and far more important parts of my story, which, I believe, are still beyond your knowledge." "Yes, certainly !" said Mucklebackit, seemingly rousing himself from some sad and sentimental reverie. "I cannot imagine, for instance, Dominie, how you managed to secure the lease of your farm ; or how you overcame the, in your case, almost insuperable difficulties I should think, of starting farming on such a large scale. You stated that Nanny had nothing, and your sixteen years teaching could not possibly have profited you to the extent of the sum required. How then in the name of wonder, did you manage it. I should like to know *that*." "Sam !" I replied warmly, "I had Agnes. Nanny, as you persist in calling her, was then mine. We were just newly wedded. You forget that. But it is now too late for this—the most interesting portion of my whole history. I must go. When shall I see you again, Sam?" "Weel," he yawned dubiously, scratching his tumbled, tousy head, and reverting to his usual Scottish idiom, "I'm as forjeskit an' forfochten enow as a baxter's aiver in hairst. Your late bout o' tailygraums' were but as a sunny shoo'r to the paper storm I hae had frae the Post Offish. But gie ye my best respects to Nanny, an' hint that, gif the brittle thread o' life hauds lang eneuch, I'll e'en stap up an' pree a spoonfu' o' her harvest parritch afore they're a suppit."

E I G H T H L E T T E R.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL—AN INTERJACENT LETTER.

“Near, and more near the thunders roll!”

In the last letter the promise of my friend was duly and accurately recorded—to wit, that in order to pree a spoonful of our “harvest parritch,” and to hear the remainder of my eventful early history, he would certainly take occasion by the forelock some canny leisure evening about the end of harvest, and revisit the old home of the old “Dominie” and his own old dear friend and admirer, the adorable but formidable “My Nannie, O.” In harmony, therefore, with this gracious promise, the other day our nimble post-runner dropped me a note in the old, large, uncouth, caligraphy of Sam, saying that we might look for him on the following evening about six. This characteristic and laconic intimation somehow got wind (no doubt through Jenny, the jaud !) and all the farm hands and others resolved to give him—it being the merry end of harvest—a right hearty country all-hail and welcome in their own approved style. The furnace in the porridge house was that day made up, and the match put to it exactly at 3 p.m. Agnes herself, alive and alert, and as brisk and energetic in her three-score-years-and-ten as an ordinary gipsy at sweet ane-and-twenty, superintended the cooking, culinary, and other preparations, which were all indeed upon a scale commensurate with the greatness of our expected guest, and the vastness of her own housewifery skill and management. Redoubtable Agnes, long may she rampage about. The oats from which the meal was manufactured of which the “parritch”

were to be made were grown in the Castle park of Clover Riggs, and the grinding of them was performed in a really super-excellent manner at the mills of Mr Watt of East Linton. The salt wherewith the feast was to be savoured was gotten straight down from the refinery in Bermondsey.

About five o'clock, the profound mistress of the mess (Agnes) proclaimed the parittch to be "ready," and ordered them to be "bickered" forthwith. The "coggie" designed for Mucklebackit was a "twa-some," specially built for the occasion by a famous local cooper—one of the new electorate—from timber obtained from the grand old "Elm Tree" (said to have been the oldest in the county) which overhung, and sheltered, and adorned so long the great Ha' door of Gosford House, and which, it is alleged, strangely succumbed to Boreas, and age and infirmity combined, and fell crash and prone upon mother earth, on the very evening that Mr Haldane left Cloanden to contest the shire with my Lord Elcho. The milk for the ensuing banquet, I may state, was gifted by a friend, to Agnes, from the matchless kine of Yester.

At a quarter to six the watchman stationed atop the highest knowe behind the steading signalled attention, and then lustily announced to us all the dim, yet unmistakable approach of Mucklebackit in the far distance. Instantly everybody leaped up within his or herself and became excited, and friend to friend shouted—"He's comin'!" "He's comin'?" At the same memorable moment of time an agile young ploughman (Forsyth) sprang like a tar up a long ladder, and hoisted and fixed on the apex of the highest stack a resplendent flag—a banner, a signal and token of boundless hospitality and dearest welcome—a red and blue table cover attached with cart nails to a pheerin' pole.

The very dogs appeared to share and sympathize with the universal high strung human feeling. At length the object of all this expectancy and elaborate preparation hove largely in the gloaming in full view—tramping with gigantic strides towards

us, utterly ignorant and unsuspicious of everything about to happen, solemnly, thoughtfully, and all alone. As he rounded the turn at the end of the entry, suddenly a tremendous cheer startled and reverberated afar through the peaceful evening, and a band of upwards of a dozen stalwart and bronzed rustics were seen to rush frantically from the hedge, and seize without palaver the dumfounded champion, and then to lift him up and bare him shoulder high with songs and shouts in triumph to the corn barn. In this late swept-out hall of Agricultural Science and Industry, the astounded bard was slowly lowered down upon his feet, and then immediately escorted to a big chair at the end of a long extemporised table, along both sides of which were ranged the bickers and tankards containing the wholesome elements of the feast now about to be enjoyed.

Sam seemed to take the meaning of it all in at a glance, for no sooner had he somewhat settled himself in his chair than his mouth opened to its widest limit, and he ejected from his "ben-moost" internals a burst of laughter like the roar of a mighty cataract in winter. "Dominie," he cried, after partially recovering himself, "Dominie, you old Reynard; this is a' your doing! But what are the bickers for? This is not the parritch house? Open up, Dominie, open up." "No Sam," I merrily rejoined, "this is certainly not the *parritch-house*. But don't you remember your concluding words at our last interview? You then obligingly signified your heroic intention to pree a spoonful of Mrs P.'s homely harvest fare. The people found out this—hence the result, and a most fitting, natural, and laudable one I consider it to be. Take all your seats callants. Mrs Pintail and Jenny will be here with the spoons directly." "Ay, an' afore they come," boldly interposed the steward, "I propose that Mucklebackit be urged to invoke a blessing on the providers of this noble feast in his ain fashion—that is, I mean in poetry." Whilst the grieve, in the simplicity of his heart, was quietly puting forth this (in his case) quite innocent, yet most ludicrous proposal, the elongated phiz of Sam assumed gradually

the most lugubrious and puritanical expression that I ever witnessed on the face of mortal man. "Silence," he whispered solemnly, and we were all silent indeed. "Oh, gentlemen," he expostulated, "this is no mocking matter. I am incapable, totally incapable of giving countenance to anything of that sort. But to please you, I will reverentially, and in good faith, say this in my own way—

"Lord, with this parritch, grant me grace
To pray the donors weal!
May 'Nauny' years yet, rin life's race,
And 'Tam' be at her heel! Amen."

At this awe-struck stage, Agnes and Jenny, the servant lass, entered with a sackful of horn spoons, which, after salutations, they deftly distributed amongst the large company, and then without ceremony we all greedily fell to. For some minutes nothing inside the large hall was heard but slorp, slorp; while every student there, with bent head and eager assiduity, appeared engrossed in discussing and mastering his own particular problem. The comparative deepness of the silence was only audibly lessened as Sam ever and anon muttered hurriedly between sops to himself enthusiastically, "Shoopreme crowdly! Oh what a feast! Such meal—such milk! Hemman!" &c., &c., "Maister Muckle-backit," interrogated Agnes at length, "is the parritch to your taste, dear? Dinna scrimp yersel. We keepit anither bickerfu' in reserve, in case ye ran short." "Oh! Mistress Pintail," returned Sam, wiping off the large drops of perspiration which, like blubs of dew on a cabbage stock, adorned his weather-beaten countenance, "I ha'ena had such parritch as thae for mony, mony a day. Indeed, indeed I have not! Dominie, I dinna' wonder Burns spak' o' the halesome parritch as being the chief o' Scotia's food. When your candidate, Lord Elcho, ca's upon ye, gie him such anither feed as this, an' then he may weel excuse you your vote."

After the removal of the things, Agnes, who had been

absent for a brief space, again made her appearance in our midst—this time with a large decanter and an empty glass in her hands. With these she made the round of the tables and offered every man a full caulker, with which, if he pleased, “he might drink to the health an’ prosperity o’ Maister Mucklebackit, an’ the great success o’ his grand new book.” I then explained to the men that the object of our friend’s present visit was of a private and professional nature, and that it was absolutely essential for us both to retire immediately to the house. Here was a most provoking hitch. By and by, their clever and locally well-known spokesman the grieve (whose surname, curiously, is also Grieve) stood up once more, and said that he and his neighbours were without doubt much disappointed. “We had a’ lookit forrit,” he continued, “for a few words frae Sam on the political situation ; an’ sae in fact it is a sad and grievous end to a’ our fond hopes to find noo that we are to be denied them. We a’ ken that for abune twenty years he has spoken, an’ striven, an’ written, an’ feuchan for the cause, an’ for the betterment o’ the hard lot o’ the puir hind. Weel trow we that we hae nae better nor truer freend in braid Scotland than Samil Mucklebackit.’ “Gif sae be that ye think sae,” keenly interposed Agnes, “why dinna ye put down your name for his book, Robin?” “I beg yer pardon mem,” he replied, a little sensitively, “my name is down for the book long ago. And what is mair, if you please men, I can say the same for every man-servant also ; he is not so dull as a deid coo, nor so green as a mouldy cheese neither. We are all subscribers—every man of us.” “Mr Grieve,” cried Sam, rising up at the end of the bench, “I thank you from my heart. I do not so merely because your name is down for the book, but for what you have said. And had it been at all in my power to have spoken to you to-night, most assuredly I’d have moved heaven and earth to have done so. But my time is really so limited that it may not be. I *must* retire with the Dominie.”

“You will all,” he continued, still lingering, “do your duty

at the polling booth—I know you will. Let no born man, no matter who or what he is, induce you individually or personally how to vote. If any sneaking canvasser, or any one in authority over you, asks how you intend to vote, straightway look him in the face and quietly say, ‘According to my conscience.’ One word more only. Many of you, I know, are Churchmen, and perhaps this fact bothers and retards you at present. If it be so, I beseech you at once to discard all your doubts and fears. They are unworthy of you. Were every ploughman, every son of the soil, ay, every working man in Britain, to vote ‘Tory,’ the Church would not be one whit safer during the next Parliament than it will be with a large Liberal majority in it. The Kirk cannot possibly be disposed of before the question is put as a test issue before the country at a general election, and this will not, cannot, be for years to come. My dear friends, acquit yourselves all like men, and Scottish men too. Refuse to be coddled with specious blarney. Think for yourselves. I do not ask that you should vote either for this man or for that man. Vote ye true—only true to yourselves and to your conscientious convictions, and I for one shall have no fear for the result. Remember the ballot is your perfect and inviolable safeguard. If you wish to keep secret, and if you do not blab upon yourselves, it is absolutely and utterly impossible for anyone to discover how you vote—mind that.

For the country, for all classes, but for the working classes and the rural communities especially, the next Parliament promises to be the most important one that ever sat within the four seas of our beloved Britain. The old land-laws shall be approached and tackled with as they never have been before. Again, we will have a broad, liberal, and popular scheme of local self-government. This also will be a measure of first-class concern to all of us, for a hundred different reasons. In its ample sweep will be embraced such questions as those of local rating, local option, primary and secondary education, pauperism, and an entire new system of county and road management, land

allotments for the people, &c., &c. Only do your duty firmly and religiously at the polling booth, and all this will follow. Good bye all—‘Gude nicht an’ joy be wi’ you a’.” So saying, my friend suddenly wheeled him round, and started, or rather bolted, for the door, on reaching which, however, he paused a moment, and, looking over his shoulder, vigorously shouted back to his surprised audience, “The polling day ! the polling booth !”

N I N T H L E T T E R.

HOW THE LARGE FARM OF BLAEBRAES WAS TAKEN.

“ From the east to western Ind,
No jewel is like Rosalind ;
Her worth, being mounted on the wind,
Through all the world bears Rosalind !”

As You Like It.

When at last we found ourselves alone in the parlour before a capital fire and a well-plenished “tappit hen,” Sam said, impatiently, “Now Dominie, yerk in. Let us hear how the deevil you, an auld fusionless, and nearly penniless schulemaister, won and started this lairge and celebrated East Loudon ferm? I’ll blaw awa’ an’ pree the jorum, and sit *mmm*, until yer story is finished. Go on—and go on at once!” Well, Sam, I began, the honeymoon of the old teacher and his young bride was to be passed decently in their own house and amidst the quiet scenes of their own native valley. Even on the first day after our marriage, Agnes, who was in strict fact an energetic, and a bustling, thrifty, “thorough gaun,” sensible, healthy Scotch country lass, was up betimes in the morning, and “redding up” and putting to rights the old “but and ben” of the schoolhouse as doucely and as demurely as if the doing of it had been part of her daily duty for the best portion of her life. “Ma certie,” quoth she, “is a’ the warld no’ afore us? an’ haena we oor way to cut throo’t oorself’s? haena we oor vera bried to yearn bie the sweat o’ oor broos, as the Lord has ordained it in His Wisdom? Up, up! Syne swallow yer brekfast as featly as you can, an’ be aff an’ awa like a scaur’d cowte to High-lee an’ see the factor

about the ferm—(O bonny Blaebraes, an' at twenty per cent. less than Jowler's!)—My sang, Tammas, but ye've played yer cairds weel. Up, I say, ye auld haverel, up this moment, an' owre to High-lee. Gin the factor be na at hame when ye gang, then bide till he come—see him—close wi' him—tak' him at his word—clinch the bargain—strike while the airn's hett—mak' yer hay when the sun shines—or—” “This day, Agnes? The first day after our marriage. Oh, fy, dearest, fy, fy. What would the people say?” “The fowk say, ye gowk! Wha cares what a' the fowk at lairge an' oot o' Bedlam wad say? But I *say* the ferm maun be gotten, an' if it's to be gotten, as gotten it maun be, as I say—it sall be gotten this vera day—ay, tho' I should seek oot the factor an' agree to the lease myself. A fine kippage ye'd mak', I 'sure ye, war ye to lose it noo—because, forsooth, ye nichtna grip it, awin' to it bein' the day efter yer waddin'. O ye Tammy-norry.” “Well, my love,” I replied, sitting down to a splendidly laid breakfast table, and after giving its matchless mistress another adorable smack with my watering lips, “Well, my jewel, I can deny you nothing, and I will, therefore, even tear myself from your celestial presence for a brief space, in order that I may visit as you wish the gruff and burly factor. But what about all those prohibitive and entangling clauses that I told you of? There are thirty-five of them in the proposed lease, and the major part of them are of the most restrictive and stringent character conceivable. Lord Glum retains the sole right to fish and shoot game upon the farm, together with the authority to quarry stones and minerals, cut timber, and to alter or make roads. Besides all that, I am, if his lordship gets his way, to be bound down, under ridiculously heavy penalties, to a particular and, I think, an antiquated and a false system of cultivating the lands—for instance, he wishes it to be irrevocably enacted that I never shall be allowed during the course of the nineteen years' lease to grow two crops of the same kind, and upon the same land, in succession. Further, a sixth part of the farm must be sown down with grass seeds each year, said grass only to be cut once, and

afterwards depastured for two years : no more than one twelfth to be cropped with potatoes during any one year; and a sixth part of the entire holding always to be fallowed or devoted to turnips, &c., &c. Now, dearest, what say you about all these monstrous clauses ? I fear I can never agree to them."

"The *clauses*" interjected hurriedly and loudly my infallible counsellor, "the clauses in the lease. Gae 'wa', Tammas. Is that really a' ye ken aboot it ? Just you mak' the best bargain ye can, an' let the *clauses*, as ye ca' them fend for themsel's. *Get the ferm.* Before mony months be by-gane there'll be an election for a new member to send up to the Reformed Parliament, whilk ye'll do weel sleely to remind the factor o' afore ye're mony meenits thegither. We ken wha my Lord Glum favours, and wha he wad vera pleasantly gie awa the doup half o' his estate to see returned. Keep a calm sough. *Get the ferm.* Besides, Tammas man, the 'clauses' ye boggle at are only set whare they are as a fence an' protection against scoundrels—*get the ferm.* They are never meant to hurt or hirple the open dealings, or control the enterpreeze, o' weel-daein', gude-paying', sensible, honest men. They are just the lawyers' whip to hand the blackguards in order. *Get the ferm.* Sae lat the clauses e'en gang—if sae ye canna do better. What is far mair important is the rent, an' the bargain ye mak aboot the steedin', for atweel it is e'enow a sorry an' a fushionless rauchle. Be ye as firm as the Bass anent that, Tam. (But get the ferm.) The Big-house ye maun coggle to get new-roofed an' renovated inside, an' a new hen-house, an' a derry forbye. Come cannily round him. Say that yer dear young mistress at hame is a great newspaper woman, an' a sicker, an' a staunch an' stoure stickler for his lordship's politics, as weel as a perfeek fury for the landed interest. Let a' this oot as if the factor was drawing it frae ye unwillingly. O get the ferm. Fleech him cannily, an' straik him wi' the hair, Tammas, an' wyse aff him a' ye want. Sae gae yer ways, an' muckle luck an' braw tidings come back wi' ye. Set aff—hoots, toots—dinna kiss ony mair.

Get the ferm, an' efterhend *that* ye may kiss."

Thus admonished and educated by my admirable general, I set off, and arrived at the factor's estate office at Highlee, just as he was dismounting from his riding colt, after coming from an interview with his Lordship in the mansion house of Bare Hall. "Hallo" cried he, coming hurriedly forward and grasping me eagerly by the hand, "Glad to see ye, Mr Pintail—glad to see ye—I wish you an' Mrs Pintail muckle joy—a lang an' happy union—rowth o' peace an' plenty. I hope she is nane the waur o' the wedding dance; I am told she danced like anither 'Cutty Sark' Haith, Tammas, an' she dinna turn oot a Tartar (excuse me for saying so) I'm dooms sure ye hae married a lass that will loup poortith an' misfortune like a red deer—an' she be ambitious or that way mindit. Step in to the offish—I'm rale glad to see ye."

As we entered the room—an apartment attached as a wing to his dwelling house, I remarked that no one was present but ourselves, but in truth this was nothing unusual, for Mr Sterne—a great, rough, stalwart, and somewhat stout gentleman, a few years past the middle period of life—did all the estate business that could be done on the ground himself. He bore the character amongst the country people of a harsh and somewhat coarse tongued man, but a shrewd, and true, and honest-hearted one at the core. A large coal fire burned on the hearth, on each side of which he placed a chair for himself and visitor, invited me to sit down, and then immediately broached the special business on which I had come.

"His Lordship thinks, Mr Pintail, that your offer for Blae-braes is no sae far amiss—as I do mysel', an' gin we can sowther atween us the ither bit odds an' ends, the hail thing may be settled aff-hand. Ye hae nae objection to showing me your bank book, eh? I ken ye no hae it here, but ye can gie me an idea o' the soom stan'in' to yer credit in it?" "Only," I replied with

breathless haste, anxious to have it out and be at the worst of it, "only a little over *eight hundred pounds sterling*, Mr Sterne, but—" "What!" he furiously interjected, "eicht hundred pounds for a muckle fowre-pair-horse ferm—two hundred an' forty acres Scots. Why, man, that's no the length o' three pund ten for ilk aere. Ye are a confounded, presuming auld humbug. Ken ye wha ye're making a fule o'? War it no' an advantage to this accursed warld, I wad ring yer gusey weason like Davie Hagart's. What for did ye no' tell me this at first? An' noo ye only bring it oot efter a' the ither offerers are refused. There war abune forty in for't. O Dominie, Dominie!" "Mr Sterne," I answered with offended yet quiet dignity (for I had previously been privately assured by a good authority that no offer other than my own had been received, although the farm had been advertised for two months; agriculture being then, as now, greatly depressed—that is, in the fifth decade of this century)—"Mr Sterne, if my offer is not now acceptable—no matter—the lease is not yet signed—and I can go elsewhere. Lord H—has twelve arable farms in the market at present. Perhaps it may be as well that I should try Lord H—. Therefore I shall just wish you a very good morning, Mr Sterne." "Never! Ye are a flichty, fiery, ramstam Dominie. O ye fouter! Sit still, sit still! Jean!" he shouted—with a stentorian vehemence as he opened the door of the passage which communicated with his house. "Jean, I say! Jean, fesh ben directly the Blue Bottle an' twa glasses an' tumblers. Sit still, dear Mr Pintail. (That'll dae, Jean! No, nae sugar.) I was wrang, Dominie, excuse me, but I am pestered beyond endurance, an' my nerves are as feckless as the hairs in a deid horse's tail.

"At first sicht, too—ye'll own that yersel'—(continued Mr Sterne) it does in gude sooth seem but an insignifecant soom to begin a ferm like Blaebracs wi'. But ane maun e'en tak' into account the *kind* o' the man, Dominie. For instance, war ony living mortals but you an' your clever, through-gaun, smeddum-fou', young gude wife to *propose* sich a thing, it wad be a leal

rale charity to tak' them bie the cull's o' the neck, and shake them like rottens in a tarrier's mou'. But I se be willin', ay *willin'* to obleege a pushing sensible man like yersel'—sae aboot the rent. As I tauld ye in my note, his lordship will tak' your offer o' £1 in cash, an' twa bushels o' barley, an' twa o' yaits, an' ane o' wheat (to be a' paid for in siller, an' computed according to the second fiars prices o' the Coonty o' Heddinton for ilka year) per Scots acre. Vera weel. Noo, I daursay, bie this time ye hae redd owre the proposed lease, an' gif sae what think ye o't Dominie?" Not forgetting my confab with Agnes in the morning, albeit thus abruptly appealed to, I craftily, and with assumed carelessness, replied—"Although I thoroughly agree, Mr Sterne, with yourself and his lordship in politics—even so far, I believe, as to who should be the new member for the county, I am not altogether in accord with either of you regarding farm leases—that is, if you take such a document as that you sent me as a specimen of what you think right in that line. The clauses, many of them, I humbly do opine, are too restrictive—ridiculously restrictive, Mr Sterne. I am not to be allowed, for example, to sell hay during the last five years of the lease." "Heuch, Tammas, heuch;" exclaimed the old factor, rising from his seat and shaking with suppressed mirth. "Capital! The last five years o' the tack! lord man, we'll a' be deid or then. But I'm fain an' prood to heer ye say what ye say o' oor candidate. I thocht I wasna sure o' ye there. Heuch, heuch! Agree to sign the lease just as it stands—lat the clauses gang—to the deevil wi' them—a' lawyers' nonsense. But is Agnes as true blue as yersel' think ye?" "Agnes," I rejoined, "Mr Sterne, Agnes is a perfect Scottish Queen Bess—a manager and a diplomatist born. Were she a man and on your committee, the election were simply as good as won."

"Capital, Dominie!" Sam irresistibly interjected, though he was in the greatest hurry to be gone on pressing business. "I kenned all along what Agnes was, though I never described her half so graphically as ye do. Go on, I'll speak nae mair the

nicht. Go on!" "But this reminds me to ask you," I continued, seeing with satisfaction the effect of my description and laudation of my adored one, "this reminds me to enquire about the steading. I hope you intend thoroughly overhauling it—although there is not yet one word about this in the lease, and before I can sign it, to be candid with you Mr Sterne, I must satisfy Mrs Pintail." "What does she want, Dominic?" he eagerly and spasmodically interrogated, "I am sure—I ken weel—she is a recognised leader an' favourite o' a' the fermers' wives an' dochters for mony miles round, an' nae doot she micht be vera valuable to us as a *private canvasser*. (His Lordship is perfectly mad to get in his young freend as a member. Keep a calm sough, Dominic.) Weel, what dis she want dune to the steading?" "The house gutted and new roofed; a brand new hen-house, and a dairy built; and all the other out buildings put into decent and habitable condition." "I'll do what I can," returned the experienced land agent cautiously, "I'll do a' that I can. I'll see his lordship the morn, an' if it can be accomplished, I'll send ye a scrape o' the pen an' lat ye ken. In the meantime, sleely egg up Agnes to veeisit a' her acquaintances an' do what *she* can—an' that's nae little, I jaloose—for oor candidate. I trow his lordship wad build twenty steadings to have him returned."

As I wended merrily my happy way homewards, I reflected with great pleasure upon the successful issue of my journey, and ere I crossed the doorstep of our modest habitation my mind was in a state bordering upon ecstasy with triumph. My expectant darling, her household duties performed, and having herself trimmed and dressed for the afternoon, confronted me at the door of our sitting-room, as radiant and beautiful as an April rainbow. "My soul, my angel!" I cried, enfolding her in my manly bosom, and lavishing thunder-showers of kisses on her upturned rosy cheeks, "my life and light, my own love for ever—WE HAVE WON THE DAY! Both the Laird and the Factor are crazy on the election; and as you, my Rosalind, advised, I

attacked the weak point and stormed with ease the very citadel and stronghold of their misgivings. Yes, dearest, in sober truth, it has come to this—that if ye will use your great influence with your neighbours in behalf of the Laird's Nominee, ye are simply to him undeniable, and may command at pleasure. The new hen house and dairy are as good as yours already. We have got the farm—everything is arranged—and the lease is to be signed next Wednesday. Oh, Agnes, what a general you are !”

This was in March, and by the end of that month the great lease (just as it was originally drawn out) was duly signed, and every other preliminary settled to our satisfaction. The entry to the farm was—as the fallow or turnip break—at the May term ; and to the house and steading, and the other lands, at Martinmas following. By the latter day the “big house” had undergone a complete renewal ; and all the other buildings, which aggregately constituted the “Mains,” had been severally dealt with and altered to suit the requirements of the highest system of modern husbandry. The turmoil and excitement of the great parliamentary election of that epoch was passed through—and his Lordship's hero had been victorious by a large majority of votes. Owing to many unforeseen difficulties and mishaps, however, the farm house was not ready for us until the following Christmas ; but when at last a day could be confidently fixed for our final removal from the village, a large number of notes with Mr and Mrs Pintail's compliments were despatched to our neighbours, inviting them all to a grand “house-heating” banquet, to be given at the farm house of Blaebraes on the evening of the 25th of December. On the memorable evening of the day on which those friendly billets were sent off, Agnes having departed with the 4 p.m. train on a two days' jaunt to Edinburgh to visit some of her old school companions, I, the fond old Dominie, to amuse myself in my deplorable and unusual solitude, penned some impromptu lines in her praise, as a kind of soother or antidote for the unspeakable love and yearning which was devouring me.”

“And no wonder, Dominie, for your Queen was a Queen Bess indeed. I could have destroyed quires and reams of foolscap in the praise of such a matchless Cleopatra. But go on, finish your tale, I must back to Linton instanter. Hurry up!”

“Yes, Sam, yes,” I resumed, “But a few lines of Richard Third’s fit here, and allow me to remind you of them—

“ Since you will buckle fortune on my back,
 To bear her burden whe’r I will or no,
 I must have patience to endure her load :
 But if black scandal, or foul-faced reproach,
 Attend the sequel of your imposition,
 Your mere enforcement shall acquittance me
 From all the impure bolts and stains thereof.”

Shakespeare.

The assertion that an arable farm of three hundred Imperial acres could be fully equipped and started with a capital of less than £850 sterling, by a man who was previously unpossessed of a single head of live stock, a bushel of seed of any kind, or of any of the multitudinous and multifarious implements, tools, and machines, absolutely indispensable for the successful prosecution of the business of the husbandman, will no doubt appear to the modern agricultural mind as a slip of arrant and wanton balderdash. Yet such, stated plainly, *was* done, and now stands recorded as an actual and indefeasible fact. And further, the adventure was not only started, but it has been carried on successfully up to the present day, *sans* extraneous aid or assistance of any kind.

No doubt, on my entry into Blaebraes, I was much favoured with certain circumstances—*e.g.*, I had all the straw and dung then upon the farm free, and also the right to use the fallow break for turnips if I wished. Besides, draught horses, and indeed all kinds of live stock, were then much easier bought in than at present; and the various implements, &c., necessary, could also be obtained for a considerably less outlay than now. More-

over, I was "back-rented," required to pay nothing to the laird during the first year and nine months of my occupancy, that is computing from the period in which I took possession of the fallow or turnip break. During the first summer I had likewise the privilege of grazing my work horses on the old grass belonging to the outgoing tenant. As I said, Sam, my entry to the fallow was at Whitsunday, and to the other lands immediately on the removal of the last grain crop of the out-going tenant at the following "back end."

The mode and cost of my procedure of entry, as near as I can recollect, were exactly as forthwith to be set down. Immediately after the signing of the lease, I magnanimously resigned my terrible "tawse," together with the whole other stock-in-trade, chattels, and paraphernalia appertaining to my pedagogic sovereignty, and put them cheerfully into the hands of my daring successor—a pert, feeble, little flute-playing dominie from the South, who had, with the consent of the inhabitants, foolishly bought over my lucrative business for a matter of £10, an old white pony, and the use of the schoolmaster's cottage for a year. I then proudly engaged two strapping young ploughmen—the sons of elder ploughmen then resident on the farm—to work for me from Whitsunday first forth, at the rate of 12s each weekly; and, as the great day of my entry drew nigh, I warily purchased, at dispenishing sales on neighbouring farms, four good stark, middle-aged work-horses, with suitable harness, ploughs, carts, harrows, &c,—the whole lot amounting exactly to only £41 9s. As the "fallow" had been all well and deeply cross ploughed during the preceding winter, and as the most part of it had been liberally dunged just two years previously for beans, I decided simply to give it a double-time with the harrows, and then drill it up and sow the seed—"East Lothian Improved Swedes" and "Green Top Globes." I gathered no "wrack" or couch grass, and as the entire section of forty Scots acres was sown with Samson's (the new teacher's nick-name) old pony by myself, the whole expenditure for the inputting of the seed—which was ac-

complished within three weeks—was just £8 10s. The season turned out a very propitious one for green crops—my turnips braided early, and flourished and grew like mushrooms, and were all “thinned” by the end of the first week in July. The singling and after hoeing cost together £22. By an agreed upon arrangement, my two servants were, after the clearing of the turnips, taken off my hands, and employed by the trustee for the creditors of the late tenant until after harvest; while at the same time the shoes were drawn from my new nags and they were put to grass for they much needed rest. In the October cattle market at Dalkeith, I purchased from a well-known dealer from Berwick-on-Tweed, thirty-five two-year-old crossed bullocks for £10 a-head; and during the same month, at the Gifford fair in East Lothian, five scores of draft Cheviot ewes, for a lump sum of £97 for the lot.

By the time the trustee had his harvest secured, I had myself thoroughly fitted with the requisite number of horses, &c., in order to begin ploughing and other operations in earnest as early as possible. The purchase money of my entire stud of nine really gallant-looking brutes (leaving out “Jupiter” the old pony—so called after his former master) represented aggregately the moderate sum of £60, and my whole stock of ploughs, carts, and all other implements—exclusive only of the thrashing mill and steam engine—cost a few shillings less than £70 sterling. Not one single article of any description on the whole farm was new; and very many of the implements, I should say, were as old as myself—and were doubtless far more than “second-handed.” The whole country side for miles round was ransacked in the getting of them together—the only merit listened to being *cheapness*—and a large number went to pieces in the process.

On a memorable morning in the latter end of the pensive month of October, I took my melancholy departure from the village on purpose to attend the celebrated weekly grain market at Haddington in order to secure by some means as much seed

wheat as would sow down thirty-five Scots acres. Before leaving the house, I had over hauled my business books and papers, and found that my hard-earned little hoard of £850 had, with one thing and another, already dwindled down to a little over £200. True, I had the cattle and sheep well bought and apparently all secure; but what if the meat markets went down, or if the stock should in any of the countless possible ways, miscarry? I remember well, as I paced hurriedly along the leave-strewn road, that all the difficulties of the vast task I had undertaken seemed suddenly to arise up before me, and magnify, and assume to themselves the immeasurable proportions of insurmountable obstacles. How were my beloved and I to sustain life until next harvest? We were already down to potatoes and salt herrings. Every shilling of which I was then possessed would be required for seed alone. And then the people's wages. The profits from the cattle, I sadly ruminated, might turn out to be *nil*. And if they did so, alas, what then? Oh Jehoshaphat! wreck and ruin would surely overtake and utterly overwhelm me; ruin, irremediable ruin, with shame, disgrace, dishonour. At this horrible stage, I abruptly halted and sat me down on an old log by the wayside, and almost wept with chagrin, vexation, and despair. Over and over again I put to myself the appalling and unanswerable query—'What if the cattle and sheep don't realise a handsome profit?'

From the beginning, I had been fixedly determined that I would sooner shake myself free of the whole concern, rather than borrow a single shilling of any one; but even if I had not been so minded, where or from whom could I borrow? In sad verity I knew not. Then, fearfully, wildly, and confusedly, dark agonizing thoughts of self-destruction flitted across my vision, but when I thought of Agnes at home, I shrank from them in dismay and scorn, and in great anger rebuked myself for entertaining them one moment. Having done this partly to my satisfaction, I at length arose from my temporary seat, half distracted, with my aching brow wet with the sweat of baffled care and anxiety, and

with my heart and mind clouded with the gloomiest forebodings conceivable. However, I pursued my way and eventually reached the market stance (then on the open street) and bought and paid for the wheat I needed, and then straightway returned home—still in the same deplorable and desponding mood.

However, Sam, what do you think? This in verity was my last grand difficulty in connection with the farm. I see you must away. I should like to tell you a little more of the opening story of my tenancy of Blaebraes, but another time will do as well. About the New Year your business will allow you time—wont it? “Yes, Dominie, Yes! Don’t tell Nanny that I am going. I’ll slip out at the back door, and she will never know. The New Year, Dominie, the New Year. Ye hae tauld me the nicht what will keep me chewing my cud till that time. Ta, ta!” (So saying I slipped out secretly by the back kitchen door—and never beheld the rare old Dominie-farmer again. In the winter ensuing, his health, never at any time very “grand,” began to decline visibly, and in December the tragic catastrophe occurred as described in the poem which follows.

'T'WAS IN THE DEID O' WINTER.

Wat, wat an' cauld, an' desolate —
Oh ! driech was that December day !
And wild an' dern, the burns, in full spate,
Rush'd an' roar'd 'tween scaur and brae.
Owre the droukit, dreepin' yird aye
Clung a dun cloud-murky screen,
That frae mankind, beast, an' birdie,
Hid complete the lift's blue sheen ;
And the gusty winds on hie
Waul'd an' whistled pensivelie
Owre a' the sorry scene !

At oor onstead, lorn an' lonely,
Man an' beast were hush'd an' housed ;
Not a cratur' oot—deuks only,
Quacking, in the dubs caroused.
Drowsy dozed the naigs in stable,
Resting limbs an' cogitating ;
In the coorts the nowt did wauble
To the shed-mooths, ruminating ;
Cocks an' hens, an' pou'try fry,
Cower'd an' twitter'd, glum but dry,
In within their netting.

In the barn the men were packit,
“ Mendin' secks ”—nae ploos that day—
Snug an' bien they shoo'd and crackit
Tete-à-tete—as guid's a “ play.”
A' the news the country offer'd
Crinch for crinch they trockit lang ;
Mulls an' pipes they plied and proffer'd,
An' mony a merry joke an' sang.
But hoo sune the gloamin' comes !
“ Men, lay by your shears an' thrumbs,
And hame, lads, let us gang.”

Hooch ! the storm o' rain had given
 Place to ane o' foggy haur—
 Like 's the cluds had just frae heaven
 Closer drawn to urge the war !
 Sair befoul'd an' ill seem'd Nature,
 Even's her latest breath she'd draw
 Thro' the welkin wing'd nae creature—
 'Cept ae solitary crow,
 Flappin' rookwards, heavilie,
 Just 's thro' Chaos Nick did flie
 When bent on Adam's fa'.

Hamewards trudged the sturdy ploomen
 Thro' the gutters an' the glaur,
 When a' at ance a strange—a new man
 Strode beside them in the haur.
 A lang, lank shape—an' wan It's face was
 As a weirdly daylight mune,
 Whan in Autumn morn the leaf fa's
 Wavering frae its hame abune.
 Silently it stude an' waved them,
 Solemnly by signs It craved them,
 It to follow sune.

'Mang the braes whare Peffer windeth
 There's an ancient quarry hole,
 Whare in spates the waste flood findeth
 A capacious gruesome goul.
 Thereto 'twas the Bogle sped them,
 Thro' the whins wi' ghaistly grace ;
 To the very brink it led them,
 Such a spell was in that face !
 Yet on, an' on—nae pool it stoppit—
 Till—sudden—owre the marge It ploppit
 Deep in its dark embrace !

Roond they wheel'd, and never waited,
 Fear ga'e wings to ilka fit ;
 But, as sune's the storm abated,
 Back they cam' an' dragg'd the pit ;
 Lo ! they fund a corpse, whase face was
 Faded as a daylight mune,
 Whan in Autumn time the leaf fa's,

Flicherin', frae the trees abune,
Whase was it? They didna fail
To see 'twas that o' auld Pintail,
Kenned a' that country roun'!

[*Note.*—The unique personage whose strange and dreadful departure at last from this under cellar of the universe, in which he has so long burrowed and squacked, is here publicly set forth for the first time in the foregoing homely verses, was, as is plainly enough indicated in the rhyme, assuredly no other than the somewhat renowned or notorious tenant of the well-known farm of Blaebraes in this county. The deceased was of an unknown, nay, even a conjectural age, as neither himself nor anyone else for the last half century was ever sufficiently daring to hazard even a guess at it. But he has gone at last—peace to his *manes*—and neither he nor his eccentric performances shall East Lothian and other parts behold again. Amen. The poor man, we learn, had for a few days prior to his lamentable and dramatic exit been exhibiting, both in public and private life, unmistakable signs and symptoms of extra mental derangement, and developing an outrageous suicidal mania. So much, indeed, was this the case that Nanny, his celebrated and vigorous spouse, had actually to resort to physical force and tie him to bed, in order to allay or restrain his unconscionable ongoings. Unfortunately, during a temporary absence of Mrs Pintail from his bedroom, the patient reached over, clutched at, and secured a large sharp table-knife which happened to be lying at the time on a chair near his bedside. With this powerful and dangerous weapon he appears to have soon made rope ends of the heavy coil of hemp with which he was bound to the bed-posts, for on the return of Agnes in a few minutes to the apartment she discovered to her terrible dismay that the poor prisoner-patient had only too surely effected his liberty—with what horrible result the reader already knows. Far and near, by thousands and by tens of thousands, this shocking calamity will be read,

and talked and written, and preached about, and deplored, and that notwithstanding the immeasurable age of the poor idiotic victim. In a future letter we may properly tackle to an A 1 analysis of the character and psychological peculiarities which so distinguished "T. P.," but at present we earnestly beg all our readers to excuse us. The shock and stun of the unheard of catastrophe was too damaging to our hearts, and is yet much too recent even to permit us to contemplate such a labour of love. Bye-and-bye. Meantime we only assure Mrs Pintail that she can comfort herself as best she may for her irreparable loss with the heartfelt sympathies and condolences of the entire people of the land, from Maidenkirk to John o' Groats, for they are, or shall be, hers indisputably.]



THE EAST LOTHIAN FARM FOLKS' CLUB.

When Sam in his auld airm-sate clanks doon,
An' doses the fire afore,
What dreams does he dream in his warlock croon
Ere he droosily starts to snore !
An' what memories droll
Rise an' rave in his poll
Of his merry-go times of yore !
Sing, hey trix, trim-go-trix.
—Oh, lang may he dream, an'—snore !

S. M.

At the time I returned to Scotland, after all my boyish wanderings, my death-rubbing 'scapes by flood and field, football-like knockings up and down, and to and fro the "dale" of this wondrous and wide, and, alas, weary world, the social condition of farm folk was a deal harder than that of country people of the present day—particularly in the matter of dwellings. In these half-forgotten times, a ploughman's domicile was simply an ugly, unhewn stone, barn-like building of four bare walls, with two holes gaping in one of them, meant for a door and a "winnock." The inside was *sans* ceiling, *sans* plaster, *sans* any floor but the clay, and *sans* the faintest vestige of any attempt at partitioning or dividing. In other respects, however, the present outward state of the working agriculturist varies little from what it was some twenty years ago—the period embraced by these later letters. The wage of farm folk has been augmented, and, as a consequence, their intellectual status, at least as members of the body politic, has been considerably raised since the time spoken of. But it is strange, and may seem at first sight difficult to explain, that, while circulating libraries, read-

ing rooms and clubs, night schools, lectures, soirees, concerts, &c., have been initiated, and are being carried on successfully in almost all our towns and villages in behoof of our poorer urban classes, not one attempt (that I am aware of) of a like kind—and hundreds have been made—have been charitably instituted and masterfully organised purposely to elevate the rural race, but has gone to the wall—died, in fact, a premature death, simply for the lack of the requisite interest and support of the people intended to be benefited. In two or three abortive enterprises of this nature I took a prominent part when I returned at first to Scotland; but, like other people, I soon perceived the intense and invariable vanity of those efforts—indeed the impossibility of their succeeding in any fruitful degree. The necessities and circumstances of the position of the country people form, in nineteen cases out of twenty, an impregnable barrier against the victory of such schemes. But in the trials of combined self-help which we did make I gleaned a harvest of the richest knowledge of the true character of my countrymen, and reaped an aftermath of laughter and diversion which often threatened to burst me altogether. At the close of some of these ridiculous scenes I have many a time retreated to a quiet corner and sat me down, and shook, and roared so hilariously for hours that I have wondered where I found all the wind to make such an infernal and inhuman commotion. Had a body of capable men suddenly discovered me in any of these retired ecstasies, Mucklebackit would have had free quarters in Bedlam next night—sure.

Today, I shall try to recall and rehearse the true history of one of those laudable, albeit foredoomed, essays at peasant self culture—to wit, the formation, and the first monthly meeting of that never-to-be-forgotten mimic and muscular league, most appropriately denominated the “East Lothian Farm Folks Club.” I shall all the more easily do this, as—from the fact of S. M. having from the first been exalted to the Secretaryship, and to the end retained at that giddy pinnacle—I am in the possession

of the minutes and all other official documents of the aforesaid Association. Of course no conceited ridicule is intended to be raised in the following report at the members' expense. Nothing further from the purpose of the writer could be imagined.

Go to, then ! Sam snatches at the ribbons and lustily cries his countless readers "all on board." The first stage is the

"SECRETARY'S REPORT."

(Carefully manufactured for the Local Press.)

"The first monthly meeting of this recently organised club was held in the Big Room of Mr Sandy Trotter's Red Calf Hotel, Tynelinn, on Friday evening—Sam Mucklebackit of Clover Riggs the secretary, being asked to take the chair, which he did, the more readily as it was large and near the jorum. This new society, which has been constituted entirely by a few kindred spirits upon the exact model of the East Lothian Agricultural Club, is purposely instituted for the sake of the "good things" which, no doubt, will be cheaply come by at its meetings, and for the free and easy discussion of everything relating in the strongest or the slightest degree to the business or pleasure of its members. No party, male or female, is eligible as a member who is not of the following professions—viz., that of small farmers, grieves, ploughmen, shepherds, cattlemen, drainers (Scotch), odd and orra men of all sorts, mechanics, ferriers, bakers, and brewers. The chiefly excluded professions are those of schoolmasters, policemen, factors, and strict teetotallers. None of the female sex can be admitted to take upon themselves the few responsibilities, and be entitled to the good fare and manifold other privileges of this popular association, saving and except those who can produce incontestable proof to the private committee that they either are, or have been, actually and *bona fide* hinds' wives, and under the strength and length of tongue of the great majority of their class. At an introductory meeting, John Hootsman, Esq., farmer, Leddyslove, was elected by ballot, treasurer, and Sam Mucklebackit, farmer, Clover Riggs, secretary and scribbler in

general to the young club—under whose masterly auspices, and restless, plucky, public-spirited vigour and enthusiasm great hopes are entertained by the whole country, that the juvenile institution will rush up before long into mature and triumphant prosperity and social usefulness.

The first monthly meeting, as was stated, was held in the Red Calf last Friday night (S. M. in the chair) and was largely attended. Amongst some dozens of other members we specially took note of the following well known originals—Messrs Pate Stoure, orra man, Windymill; Jack Hunter, farmer's son, Foxley; John Heatherbel (familiarly "Heather Jock"), shepherd, Muirhill; Tam Coom, blacksmith and ferrier, Tinglering; Donald Ronald M'Donald, of Castle Wa's; Davie Carter, carrier, Onywhere, &c., &c. After one single little genial "here's tae 'e" had been pree'd all round of Sandy Trotter's cheapest, the meeting smacked its lips and settled down to serious business.

The Chairman led off by tabling a catalogue of the names and addresses of some twenty ladies whom, he said, he would do himself the high honour of proposing as fit members at the next monthly assembly.

Mr Cowdoun, Tireneuk, demurred to the very alarming number and gender of the proposed addition to the club, but after some prolonged, good-humoured banter and merry conversation, it was at length, by common consent, agreed to let the matter go on.

ON THE MANAGEMENT OF THE COW.

Mr Tam Coom, blacksmith's man, Tinglering, then reared erect and strode forward to where a not yet empty vessel stood upon the table, and, after wetting his lips with its contents with much fuss and coughing, inaugurated the subject set down for the evening's discussion by reading the following paper, entirely

written by himself, on "The wa' til manidge a kow." The worthy village vulcan's man and veterinarian spoke exactly as follows:—Mainy a man cood keep a kow, bit for the mailinkoly fawk thit hee hizna wan til keep. (Hear, hear.) A good fue ither men, sich as gentry, hiv 2 or 3 or mor, and, divna no hoo till keep wan. (Hear, hear, and a Voice—"Wire in, Tam.") This world is ill deevidit! For insince, geegs ev'ry day in wintir rin bi the smidy with people intil them rowd up in shawls an' mufliers an' mitens, whoo hiv nothing whativir too doo. On the ither hand, ovr the dike in the feelds, yeel see poor boys an' kalants an' weemin klapin thir bare kald hands agane thir sides for perfik stervashin, but whoo must wurk day aftir day or dee. (Applause.) The manidgement o' a kow also deepends gratefully on yoor meens. The *hoo* too doo it is no say mutch the questin in most kases as the no haein the meens too dade wee. (Great cheering, and the Voice—"Three cheers for the Vulcan.") For maself, the kow's keep in the spring is offin a sor thoct. Hoo-somevir, where the meens is, and whain the kow hiz cauved safe, the follyin treetmint 'ill generly bee fund too ansir. As sune as posyble eftir the cauving wash yoor hands an' give the cauf a hen's eg. This, if it disna chok the kraytur, tests and kleens the allymentery kawnall an' dodedendrum, an' gives in wan moothfy the rekysite nurizhment for a hol day. (The Voice—"Ends the weld thegither wi ae heat; three cheers for the smith!") Eftir this the yung thing shood geet beeston for a fue days. Now for the kow! Bilt barly sum peepil give thir ky, but I say an' kan prove that kookit food is vera injoorus. Barley heets and ferments in the stamick, an' is offin the kaws o' indyjeestin an' the kow's death. Beter, far beter, is it too give poor Krummy noo an' agane sum loo wattir wee a handfy o' yitmeel. In all kases avide ovirfeedin; but there's no feer o' that in East Loudon for some time too kum. (Great laughter.) Eftir the old kow hiz gotten all betir shee shood bee at the gress bee the Noo Tairm, and milkit three times evry day. What a byootyfool, byootyfool site, it is too see a kleen tidy wife sittin milkin hir koo in a rich pastur on a bony simir mornin. (Great

applause.) The kow shood be keepit at the gress til the next wuntir apeers, an thain shее shood hiv plenty stray an turneeps. Keep the bire klean an wel muckit oot an warim. This is awl aw hiv been able too not doon abowt the manidgement of the kow ; and as this is ma first papir—egseptin akoonts—aw hiv writin sin my skool days, aw hop ma brither membirs ill eksyoose ony smal mistaik in't. (Great applause, during which the Voice was overheard bawling — "Three cheers for the Vulcan ; gie him a drink ; three cheers for the Vulcan," &c., &c.)

Treasurer Hootsman—Gentlemen, I rise in the name of my whole countrymen, including, of course, the noble members of this patriotic and most admirable society ; I rise to thank, with a full heart's spontaneous language, our stalwart club-fellow, Mr Tam Coom, for the exceedingly interesting and most valuable paper which he has just read us. (Hear, hear.) Mr Coom, let me shake hands with you. You are a noble fellow, sir. Depend upon it, as the representatives of the press are here present, that by next week at this time you will be a famous man, and that your homely patronymic—yea, even "Tam Coom"—will be in everybody's mouth. You are a philosopher in the block, you are ; and were you hewn out, you would be worth a plum to your country. As treasurer of this important institution, I call upon you, Mr Coom, to hand me over instantly your magnificent paper upon "kow management," so that I may see full justice done to it by the press.

Mr Coom (excitedly)—Certainly, Mr Hootsman ; there it is. And gin it's to be prentit, maybe ye'll look after the spellin' o' some o' the big words."

Mr Hootsman — Spelling ; to Auchtermuchty with your spelling — it is spirit, Tam, spirit — the thought — the "light that never was on sea or shore" — which in these things is everything ; and, albeit I am an old speechifier myself, I care not one pinch of snuff for correct spelling. (Applause by the whole

room.) The startling vastness and the unique brilliancy of the light which you have thrown upon this great theme would excuse the spelling of a Laplander. No doubt, continued our "joking John," speaking to the general meeting—no doubt, the "light" shed by Mr Coom does not, gentlemen, illumine the entire subject under debate. But what light under the moon could ever do so, I ask? The various breeds of the cow, for example, have not received a single ray from this intellectual luminary. The best variety of the cow, for your needs, I take to be the Ayrshire. I do not think a full-bred shorthorn would be a profitable cow for a poor man. I have heard great things of the Guernseys, but my own experience decidedly points to an Ayrshire, or a cross between a shorthorn and an Ayrshire, as the right thing. With regard to the keeping or the feeding of milk cows, I would advise in all seasons a liberal use of bran, and particularly at the time when the rye-grass in East Lothian ripens and begins to wither—*i.e.*, the latter end of June and all July. Over and above the sedative and laxative qualities of bran, it is, next to young clover, the cheapest and greatest milk producer we have. I agree out and out with all Mr Coom's dissertation on the "manidgement of the bire." It goes to the mark straight as an arrow; and I am sure, gentlemen, you will allow me to say that we are all placed under a very deep load of indebtedness to him, indeed, for his learned and scientific and most valuable speech. (Great cheering and laughter.)

Mr John Heatherbel, shepherd, Muirhill—I dinna see the use o' a' this fuss an' noise about a wheen kye. Gin a stranger cam' in, he micht think some o' the rowtin' beasts had gotten in among us. I sid like weel tae ken what Mucklebackit himsel's thinkin' about a' this kippage. He's sittin' at the heid end o' the table up there, toozlin' the hair o' his awfu' heid an' bitin' his nether lip; but I'm sair gane gif he's no lauchin' at ye a'. (Hissing, and cries of "Order, order.")

After the uproar had subsided Mr Heatherbel resumed by

declaring that he had keepit a coo for comin' on thirty years noo, and he never had ony difficulty wi' her management, by ord' nar'. Ony man wi' a partiekle o' sense in his pow could pick up in five meenits a' that was needfu' to be kent for the proper management o' kye. As for Tam Coom's paper thereanent, he believed that ony auld wife in Lammernuir micht hae spoken as muckle to the purpose; and he said that meaning no disrespect to his worthy friend, but just as his candid and independent opinion upon the matter in hand. He concluded by saying that after all he had listened to that nicht upon the subject, he had heard naething that he didna ken before, excepting Mr Hootsman's advice aboot gien' the coo a bran mash at the end o' simmer. But Hootsman was worth sittin' listening to, for they a' kent him to be a clever fallow, an' ane o' the best-hearted men living, besides. (Hear, hear, and three cheers for John Hootsman.)

Mr Davie Carter, carrier, Onywhare, deprecated, in homely and canny, cautious doric, the tone of the previous speaker's remarks, and smoothly asseverated that he, for one, had been greatly benefited and entertained by the discussion. His experience of cows was chiefly confined to the buying and disposing of their hides, after the poor animals had died by the act of God, or by the hand of his creature—man. He had always found that the hides of the best kye brought the most money in the market, and *vice versa*. Would butchers, shepherds, and others take a little more pains in the skinning of the poor creatures, he had no doubt it would be to their advantage. He declared, ruefully, that he had often been exceedingly tantalised by having first-class looking skins offered him for purchase, which, upon examination, were seen to be almost worthless, by reason of the countless tears, cuts, and holes in them, caused by ignorant or careless skinning. (Cheers.)

After some half-dozen other members had fully discharged themselves of this engrossing topic,

The Chairman, on rising to sum up the debate, was received with a welcome of applause, which lasted fully ten minutes by the clock. After every individual in the room had cheered himself hoarse and black, Mucklebackit said—My friends, I hope you will be quiet for the next three minutes. I have little to say, and certainly no jokes. I know hardly anything yet about cows—though I mean to learn—and I'm not sure if I could distinguish say on a Hallow E'en or a Hansel Monday night—between the cries of a real ranting, rowting crummy and that of our brawny friend, Mr Coom. (Laughter, in which Mr Coom ably assisted.) My life hitherto has not been passed in the haunts of the cows, although it has been sufficiently crowded round and jammed in by the John Bulls. Therefore, on the subject of the debate I pray you to be excused ; but anent the debate itself, I crave leave to say that it has proved conclusively to my mind that agricultural topics can be as spiritedly and as intelligently discussed in this room, by ourselves, as they are in the Chamber of the Agricultural Club in Haddington, by the great oratorical magnates of the county. (Loud and long applause.) Well then, my friends, if you are really for pushing this, your young and noble institution, to a high and a lasting success, I earnestly advise you, after this night's experience, to affix one more rule to your list instanter—a rule which shall efficiently prohibit any member from reading a paper who has not previously received the sanction of the Private Committee to do so. (Were our friends up the water also to adopt a similar regulation it might be as well for their club.) Mr Coom, we will kindly say, has laid the Club to-night under a deep debt to him—so he has. Do you understand me? (After a pause, sudden and great applause.) I have listened to many a public speaker, but to a speaker of Mr Coom's calibre—never before. His unparalleled boldness—or call it what you will—astounded me. And then the scene betwixt him and our too good-natured friend, Hootsman. Shall I say a few plain words to him? (Hear, hear.) Well then, Mr Coom, look here. I know you to be a capable blacksmith, and a respectable and respected man in your sphere.

But you weren't content with this—you must have more—therefore the “*papir*.” Now, there is no ill in a blacksmith, or any other body, writing, or trying to write, a “*papir*”—indeed the doing so may be exceedingly laudable, but your act ceased to be praiseworthy, and became blameable, and merited nothing but reprehension and ridicule, the moment you resolved to mount the rostrum of this infant Association with it, for the purpose of blazing your mighty self abroad to all the world—because, by doing so, you were not only going to draw down ridicule pell-mell upon your own head—and that would have been wrong enough—but you were also going to bring discredit and the world's scorn upon every member of this mighty and admirable institution. However, we'll all go home and sleep over it, Mr Coom, and perhaps in to-morrow's daylight it may turn out to be a satire! only a satire, after all.

MINGLING WITH THE MAGNATES.

What time the mune, like deid Sol's ghost,
Among the clouds—now seen, now lost—
Abruptly flared and fled ;
An' wan an weird owre Nature fell
The licht's an' shadows o' her spell
In fitfu' shine an' shade ;
There, sheltered in a lordly ha',
John Hootsman and his " Sam "
Resolved to scan an' study a'
Wealth's glittering show or sham.
An' seeking an' keeking,
The scales fell frae their een ;
For a' there they saw there,
Was just Life's fairer sheen.

S. M.

My intimacy with Hootsman was, *par excellence*, the means of my introduction to the grandees—for handsome "joking John" was hob and nob with people of all denominations and degrees. He first brought me under the dubious and brief patronage, and aristocratic wings, of Sir and Lady Richard Stuart Pickle of Glun—promising and prominent types both of the *genus homo*, he and she. Sir Richard, a slim, pert, dapper, feeble gentleman, as the eldest and only son (pardon the bull) of his two parents, had succeeded in his twenty-second year to his fine and extensive estate. In his days of single blessedness he had, I was told, been addicted to "sport"—as far, that is, as his very parasitic and meek nature would allow him. He was now in the mid years of his fourth decade. Alas for poor Sir Richard! for in his thirtieth year he had been coaxed, or wheedled into the meshes of matrimony by the present "wife of his bosom," and was now by her literally and absolutely extinguished. Such

another obliteration and stamping out of the masculine nature of a living man was never known in these parts. Lady Pickle (her husband's senior by ten years at least) was the exact physical, mental, and moral antithesis of her lord. Tall, commanding, and handsome; she was a woman of a subtle, scheming mind, and of an extremely proud, self-willed, and capricious disposition. Before she "caught" Sir Richard, she was living in a neighbouring town, an "adventurous widow," and not an over rich one. By the time of which I am talking, she had acquired an ascendancy and control over her facile and feeble husband. And this despotic sway she exercised utterly regardless of time, place, or persons present.

Hootsman one day had business with Lady Pickle (for when at home she was the resident administrator of the estate—the "laird"—and not Sir Richard), and asked me to accompany him. As we drove up the grand avenue of old oak and elm trees leading to the mansion house, Hootsman started in his seat suddenly, and cried—"By the Lord Harry, Sam, here they both are of whom we were just speaking." And, sure enough, in a second or two, we encountered the noble dame and her other half, apparently out for an airing. Lady Pickle was dressed and bedizened in the fullest blow and flush of fashion, yea, even, in royal magnificence, and moved and stalked before us like a modern Cleopatra and Lady Macbeth combined. She was remarkably handsome, but pride and vanity had puckered up and sadly distorted her once beautiful face, still you saw at a glance that she was a clever and powerful woman. Sir Richard, dressed in a fantastic suit of slashed Lincoln green, and with a feather in his bonnet—something like a page of *mesdames* in the olden times—when we met, was walking demurely some ten paces in advance of his lady, carrying over one arm a mantle, and a silk umbrella in the other hand.

As Lady Pickle recognised Hootsman, and stopped to shake hands with us, she called out to Sir Richard, "Dickie, Dickie!

wait till I come." He halted at once, like a soldier brought up at the command of his officer, wheeled a little round, and answered, without daring to look at her, and in a cowed, piping, treble voice. He was a good-looking little man enough, despite his beardless and rather juvenile seeming visage; and under happier circumstances he might have become—who can tell?—quite a "good fellow." I do not think he wanted intellect—I should rather suppose the reverse—but that intellect was too refined, too sensitive, too "soft" to fit into the making of a true and proper man. What he lacked, I should say, was will, resolution, and courage, pith, force of character, to execute it. Much of his seeming effeminacy, and the whole of his present external circumstances, were forced upon him, and were not the outcome of his real nature. And that force which made him look what he was, was exerted by a far superior will—a will which he was all unable to withstand—merely to gratify a love of power. For, to a female nature such as that of Lady Pickle's, power is the everything—the Alpha and Omega of its supreme and ceaseless desire.

When Jack had stated and disposed of his errand, "Cleopatra" bended graciously to me, and said she *ardently desired Mucklebackit's better acquaintance*. "And for that purpose," she condescendingly added, "she would take to herself the honour of formally inviting both of us (through her *maitre d'hôtel*) to dinner on Thursday evening." Messrs John and Sam were to be had to dinner on Thursday first. So soon as we had got fairly beyond sight of this extraordinary couple, we both jumped from the trap, hanked the nag to the nearest tree, and then lay (or rather fell) down and rolled over and over on the grass, helpless with laughter, for half an hour or more thereafter. In due time we came to the resolution to honour the invitations—and in our funeral blacks and white chokers.

Accordingly, on the aforesaid Thursday evening, punctually at seven, we made our gallant entry into the lordly reception

room of Glum. To our intense astonishment—indeed, dismay—we found it already crowded with a distinguished and fashionable assemblage of the surrounding nobility and other notables, amongst whom, after our presentation to our regal-looking hostess, we emphatically took intent note of the following specials:—The Duke and Duchess of Arden Forest and their two sprightly and enchanting nieces, the Ladies Rosalind and Celia; the Lady Matilda, maiden sister, and the seven unmarried daughters of Lord Glum of Bleakanbare; Lord and Lady Strae of Haymouth Castle; the young Hon. Oh Ah Yawning Dandy and his brother, near relatives of Lord Dundreary, from London; Lord Mawkin and Lord Blue Scot, the conservators of every head of “game” and the rest of the immaculate British Constitution on Tyneside, &c., &c.

Hootsman, of course, was at once entangled in the midst of a coterie of comely dames and maidens fair (I verily believe this man might have woo’d and won and married the Sublime Favourite of the Sultan of Turkey had he chosen), whilst I (alas, poor Sam!), who had—quite absent-mindedly—donned a large blue worsted muffler, instead of my neat and dainty snow-white necktie, which had employed Tibb a full half day getting up, was left out in the cold to argle-bargle with old dads, uncles, bachelors, and wife’s cousins. When the dinner bell rang all was hurry and scurry, and ere I knew well what was in my mind, I found myself in the midst of a long procession of ladies and gentlemen, “coupled in pairs,” marching off gaily to the mess-room. My partner was a charming gazelle of some fifty and odd winters, large and full-boned, and as square and angular as a new-built house, to wit, the sharp-featured and gleg-witted spinster sister of my Lord Glum of Bleakanbare. Before we had reached the mess-room we were both madly in love with each other. What numskulls they are that declare there is no such thing as love at first sight. But here is the dining chamber. Mercy! Such a blaze of light! Such a sparkling, beaming, glittering, glistening, flashing, flaming I never did see! Arabian

Nights—fairy palaces—pooh ! Hastily I handed my dear Lady Matty to a seat, and planked my own huge carcase upon another one on her right, and then—stared. Stared long and marvelously, stared till I had understood, or, at least seen, every nook and cranny of it all ; and then I turned my attention—with a sigh that might, if it didn't, have aroused St Peter—to the dear bewildering maiden at my side. She wanted to know if I were ill. I said a slight crick in the neck only, and then dived deep into conversation with her immediately.

She had been reading, she said, some recent verses of mine on the "Probable Future Tactics of the Devil," and stated that she did not agree with me. "I see," she charmingly continued, "I see, Samuel, that you are a believer in a personal fiend or Evil One. Have you ever speculated upon his probable ultimate destiny ? I am very anxious you should tell me this. Yes ! Come, *do* tell me !" she pleaded tenderly. The darling was irresistible, so I answered—"Yes, Oh yes, Leddy Matty, offin. He's to be brunt—brunt to a literal naethingness, lea'in' ahint him no sae muckle ase as will bulk wi' a ten thoosandth pairt o' ane o' Tyndall's atomies !" "Oh, dear me !" cried Leddy Matty, pale and breathless, "and how is such a dreadful destiny to be accomplished ?" "Weel," I replied cautiously, "weel, Auld Hornie, my dear Leddy Matty, Auld Hornie is maist like to be burned and blazed aff at the hinder end in some such a style as wickit Auld Red was—only still mair spontaneously and mair completely." "Wicked Old Red, Samuel, who was he ? and how was he consumed ?" [At this point Hootsman, who was sitting nearly opposite me to the left, I noticed, was as the Apollo Belvidere—actually instinct with life and inspiration. He was the sun and centre around which young and old lady satellites revolved unceasingly ; and as he saw that I was getting along well, he verily seemed to flame with happiness.] "Auld Red," I resumed, "my Leddy Matty, Auld Red was an aristocrat o' the aristocrats, an' a limb o' the Evil Ane, oot and oot. For lang years afore the final catastroffy whilk teuk him

aff this yird, body an' sowl at ae an' ane whusk, he ilka day used to drink nine bottles o' port—nine bottles an' ne'er a gill less! And at last he grew sae big and fat, my Leddy, that his doors had to be widened some twa feet to let him oot an' in. When he wanted a new suit, he had to gie warning to the merchant a week or twa afore sae that he could order frae Galashiels for the emergency. Aboot a hunder yairds in front o's hoose there was a sma' hill, Leddy Matty, ca'd the Warlock's Knowe, an' on the croon o' this wee warlock hillock, Auld Red had gotten a divot sate built for his ain individ'ual use. On this, every guid efter-nune, he used to sit an' drink an' smoke for oors an' oors thegither, an' his face shone like a setting sun seen thro' a blue screen. The herds on the Lammermuirs—miles aff—a' kend it, and used to say when they saw him — 'It's a fine afternoon — Auld Red's oot the day.' Well (will your Leddyship lauch less an' listen?), weel down upo' this turf bench, the last afternoon o' his existence, Auld Red squatted, efter drinkin' aff a ae-some bicker o' his favourite beverage, an' syne shouted to his valet to bring him a licht for his cigar. The flunkey (a fine chiel and auld freend o' mine) did sae, an' returned to his plate cleaning an' chaffing to Jean Ann, the bonnie hoosekeeper. Auld Red scartit a spunk belyve an' held the lowe forrit to his cigar—when hooley, hooley—Oh, ma darlin' Leddy Matty, wad ye trow it?—the breath o' the auld drucken fouter, whilk was become nocht but a vile-smellin' alcholic gas, took haud and bleezed like a tar'd torch. Frae the mooth o' him in a second there shot a flatfin' flame an' ell long, whurlin' aboot his heid like an avenging sward, which, do his best, he couldna extinguish. He clappit ae loof efter anither on till his mou', but only got his fingers brunt for his pains. In a jiffy the gas set fire to the fat, the fat to the flesh, an' the three thegither sune made sma' bouk o' Auld Red." "Extraordinary; most extraordinary," gasped Lady Matty, "was he totally burned up, Samuel, dear?" "Ay, my bonnie Leddy Matty, when the flunkey cam' oot to fetch him in he stared, like Burns's wee Hughoc, at a gowpinfu' o' gray, win-strewn asc—a' that was left

o' the mortal o' Auld Red. After a wee, he poutert the ase wi' his fore finger to see gin he couldna fin' some sma' unburned remnant—sich as a ring—for a keepsake. In the middle o' the toorie o' ase he fand something hard, and teuk and pat it in his pooch. That was a' he cud discover. The flunkey cam' to me wi' the little hard knot he had found. It was about the size and shape o' a walnut, but a' bleert an' dimmed wi' the fire. I set to that nicht wi' some sweet oil and a wheen cloots an' scoured it up, and it turned out to be the neb o' Auld Red's nose. Ye see, my Leddy, it had burned sae lang on his face wi' the drink that it couldna burn ony mair. I hae't at hame in my museum o' kickshaws an' nicknacks—shining like a carbuncle o' the first water.” “Oh, Mucklebackit, Mucklebackit; speak no more—I am sore with laughing at you,” interrupted Lady Matty, and just as she did so I was further obstructed by an officious serving man behind our chairs, who wished, he said, to put away and secure my large worsted cravat in a proper place, I having just unwound it from my neck, as the heat of the apartment was only too consciously affecting me. “Not a stiver,” I said; “not a stiver, my billie. A three yaird owrelay is no tae be had sae cannily, my man. Gae fleece yer 'oo' aff anither sheep—this comforter gaes hame to Clover Riggs wi' me. And, tak' ye tent, my braw lad, that my hat and stick are forthcoming when I want them, or I'll wring your weason like a capital malefactor's.” And so saying I rolled up my muffler and stowed it away in my oxter pooch, to the manifest satisfaction and glee of my charming Lady Matty.

The dinner consisted of thirteen courses, and lasted from sunset to moonrise. Every one, with his (or her) neighbour, was blythely engaged in talking all the time; and I could not have believed, unless I had witnessed it, how little of pride, flummery, or ceremony there is among the real gentry. Grandeur, splendour, magnificence were all around—richest furniture, pictures, plate, glistening candelabra, flowers, fashion, and dignity, and here and there remarkable female beauty; and yet

all the company—the whole company, with one exception—seemed to look upon and to speak to each other just as other folks do. “Conscience,” I cried, within my ain sough, “is this a fact? or is it only a dream?” Answering Lady Matty in monosyllables, I gazed, and scanned, and surveyed, and sought the whole table from end to end for signs of haughty patrician pride—which, I thought, might have indicated themselves by the presence of Hootsman and myself—but no; I could detect none. “Leddly Matty,” I said, “ye ken weel that sic scenes as the present are a kennin’ removed beyond my sphere in life, sae tell me, Leddy Matty, an’ tell me truly, gif this be a fair average example o’ a denner in high life? I want to ken, and I want to ken richtly.”

“I am not sure,” she answered slowly, “if I understand you correctly, Samuel. You speak so—so—excuse me—so eagerly. But I suppose you wish to learn if the conduct and personal bearing, the deportment and general manners, of the people here are similar to those which are to be commonly met with in society?” “Yes,” I jerked in, “that’s just it. Go on Leddy Matty, go on!” She says—“I am delighted to find that I have divined your query so exactly. Well, don’t you know, your question is such a big one that I am afraid I really cannot definitely answer it on the bit. There are people and people, and there are parties and parties. And you know there are individual cases so exceptional, and so very exceptional, at times. But, upon the whole, I should say that the company here offers a perfectly fair pattern of the manners, and etiquette, and modes which should always govern, and which, indeed, do generally govern, I believe, polite circles. Of course I do not include in this statement the rather imperious ways of our hostess. Lady Pickle’s management of poor Sir Richard you will rightly think rather odd and *outré*. This is an extreme, but by no means a solitary, case of its kind in the upper ranks of society. I have myself known a good many hen-pecked husbands belonging to the higher classes; and I think they are far more commonly

met with in the higher than they are in the middle and lower grades of life. And this too is rather a private and family arrangement, you know; otherwise, too, she is a far more efficient person than her husband, and consequently can naturally overlook the administration of their large estates with more skill and judgment than Sir Richard. It is given out, besides, that he is scarcely 'all there' in his intellect."

Just at this point—the dinner being then sometime over—all the ladies with one consent clutched at their voluminous skirts, and paraded, rustling and bustling, out of the apartment. So soon as they were fairly gone, one or two of the gentlemen sidled up to Sir Richard, who was sitting close to the head of the table on the left hand side, and helped him to some wine. He glanced timidly towards the door by which the ladies had just passed out of the room, nodded to his friends, and then drank hurriedly off, without more ado, a tumbler containing about two ordinary glasses of port. I arose with the intention of having a chat with him if possible, but just as I was placing myself by his side the door suddenly swung ajar, and a gigantic flunkey, in claw-hammer coat, white choker, and knee pantaloons, entered and stalked rapidly over to us, and whispered to Sir Richard that he was wanted immediately. Sir Richard's countenance fell and darkened a little when he heard this arbitrary command; he seemed to look at me appealingly, and bit resolutely his under lip, but observing the serving man (a thing of Lady Pickle's) waiting for him, he said, "Oh yes," and humbly rose to obey. I grasped him by the arm and retained him like a vice, and said—I believe rather violently—"Do not go. Why should you go if you don't want to? Be a man. I will stand by you against a regiment." The long flunkey, gaping and staring, and strutting like a fluttered peacock in his pumps at my unheard-of audacity, meekly intimated—in a low sneaking voice, and with a cringing air—what he no doubt considered would be a conclusive clencher and settler of the dispute, "Oh, Mr Mucklebackit, Sir Richard *must* go; *it is her ladyship's*

orders." Not deigning to take notice, and, indeed, intentionally disregarding the presence and words of this apparently thoroughly cowed and effectively trained lady's dog, I said—"Are you wanting to go, Sir Richard? Do you *will* to go?" "Oh yes, dear Mucklebackit, I must—that is, I want to—go," he replied brokenly; and so I quitted his hand, and he immediately trotted off after the flunkey in extreme haste.

"What's this you have done, Sam?" cried Hootsman, approaching at the moment. "I saw and heard it all. Don't you know that that giant in the white calves is Lady Pickle's personal property, her instrument, her factotum, her willing, bound slave and servitor? This is your last dinner at Glynn during her reign, you may bet." "Hoots, toots, Hootsman, but gif sae, that muckle winna brak the back o' Mucklebackit. Let us rejoin the others down there. See, they are calling us." "Mucklebackit," cried three or four gentlemen at once, "you smoke? Will you neighbour us in the smoking-room? Then come along. Hootsman is for the ladies in the drawing-room. Come on."

We went out by a side door, and passed along a splendid corridor of some twenty yards in length, and having a floor inlaid after an ancient Roman style, wrought in mosaic of many coloured marbles. The high roof was adorned with gaudy mosaic pictures of seemingly countless objects. The walls, up to six feet from the floor, appeared to be stuccoed, and from that to the top beautifully frescoed. On what looked like slabs and pedestals of lapis luzuli, were ranged at intervals along both sides of the passage statues of children strewing flowers, and other figures, all in beautiful white marble. At the far end of this magnificent pathway was situated the smoking-room into which we all filed at once, and were instantly overwhelmed in a whirlwind of talk and tobacco reek.

There would be about a dozen of us altogether. Excluding

myself, they, with one or two marked exceptions, were a group of mild-mannered, courteous, high-bred, intellectual fellows. The precious "exceptions" alluded to — the gad-flies, real snobs, gaggling dandies, Cockney gawks—at first thought to gammon and poke fun out of the rustic, awkward, and uncouth Muckle-backit. But they both suddenly (but not prematurely) retired from the attempt, confusedly, and blushing like two boarding school brats, before I had spoken to them twice; and they very wisely kept at the full room's length from me the whole night afterwards. The other gentlemen, who were all middle-aged or elderly, I found to be hobby-riders—every one.

Two were for maintaining the sacred game laws even, if need were, at the point of the bayonet. A third enthusiast was for sweeping at once and for ever every known evil of every kind and name out of the country with a "Permissive Bill." (This gentleman's private personal appearance rather belied his public professions, however, for he was about the neatest tilter and emptier of a brandy-and-water glass ever I saw. And I did not wonder at it, for he practised the trick with the most assiduous regularity). A fourth was an eager archaeologist, of doubtful accuracy and deductive power, I should surmise. A fifth was a keen biologist of the Huxley school—a troubled-looking, thought-worn, cadaverous philosopher—the ablest man in the room, in my opinion. A sixth was a watery-eyed, long-locked dweller upon Parnassus—not on its very summit, I should think. And so on, and so on.

Each and all of these patronised me by turns, wanting to know my views of this, that, and the other thing. At the close, a general—and very hot—discussion arose upon the universal topic—and the most momentous of all—religion. I sat and listened in amazement, saying nothing. I was dumbfounded, and sorry beyond speech, to hear some of the views expressed by these good and noble men. The disciple of Huxley at last, like a judge pronouncing doom, gave it forth that eventually all the

old faiths—if not religion itself—were bound to go by the board. One of the idiots, unutterable, who had tried to laugh at me, on hearing this cried from his corner, “Oh, ah, yeth, of cauce! Played out, you knaw, of cauce!” I noticed that the Huxleyan was indubitably earnest in what he said, and that the belief in its truth was causing him great soul-anguish, so I spoke in my turn and said, addressing myself especially to him:—

“Mr Grier—How can a man escape that which is in him? I refer specially at present to grief or the burden of melancholy thought—on the apparent doom of man—the mystery of the universe, &c. There are only *two* ways, and one of them—that of engaging vigorously in a favourite pursuit, and, by a strong effort of will, refusing to think—can only, in the nature of things be but partially successful at best. The other is the religious one, finding peace in Him who cries, “Come unto me all ye who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” (Of the antidote for mental trouble by death, we can say nothing, since we do not, and can not, know what follows dissolution.) The religious one, then, alone remains. And as a solemn fact—and as a glorious fact, too—I say I have encountered a few who, I believe, have found this way. Of course I am speaking just now to men of thought—earnest thinkers—of men who were oppressed by the phenomena of Nature—the seeming end of humanity, and other appalling problems. Were they deluded? If they were, no softening of the brain ensued, and they seemed to live as good and happy men—only to me they looked and became as somehow different and above all other people—sort of etherealised, spiritualised, as it were. And after long years of all kinds of cares and trials, borne even cheerfully, I thought, one or two of them died and passed, in the usual fashion, away into the inscrutable, awful blackness of death. Now, I say, the men I speak of were men of thought—scientists—men in the fore front of the age—intellectual pioneers. If this, their peace, was a delusion, Mr Grier, what call you your present state? You wince, and well you may. What sufficed the early gods—Dante, Shakespeare,

Bacon, Locke, Newton, Milton, Scott, and their peers—let satisfy you. Your need of religion is an overpowering argument for it.” The yellow philosopher shook his weighty head as we left to go to the drawing-room and I never saw him again. The rest of the evening was passed very pleasantly, and some of the young ladies present played and sang like veritable cherubim. To Hootsman the party was as a night in paradise all through. Some of the gentlemen, also, shone like professionals in the way of stretching their windpipes. I was asked, seriously asked, to sing. As there were there no rattle of coal carts or thrashing mills to accompany me, I simply refused. The ladies then pressed me for a recital of one of my own screeds, and, to escape their irresistible importunities, I abruptly jerked up and jerked them off this blaud about—

AULD CASTLED HAILES.

(On Leaving for a Foreign Land.)

Meander on an' glide awa',
 My gentle Tyne ;
 Wend by Hailes' ruined castle wa'
 Like stream divine !
 Too soon to me shalt thou hidden be,
 For aye, for aye.

Shoot high thy broken battlement,
 Auld castled Hailes ;
 Thy rugged turrets, riven, rent,
 Till time, beaten, wails !
 Grim and hoary, tell thine own grand story
 To the endless years.

“For ever !” oh, the heart is sair—
 For ever, ever, ever ;
 And I shall scan thee with proud eye nae mair,
 Oh never, never !
 Wail, thou wintry gales, through castled Hailes—
 Och hone the day !

Here my young footsteps lov'd thy keep,
 Romantic Hailes !
What time the howlet, weird an' deep,
 The moon assails.
And here—oh, here—I trysted here,
 My Jean, sweet Jean !

Here the martin and the water ouzel,
 When gloamings wane
Shall come, sweet summer, musical,
 When I am gane ;
And the cushat crood in the drowsy wood,
 Like Nature's saul !

The jenny wren an' the sedge singer,
 The wagtail, sae spree ;
In the golden evenings here shall linger,
 While unremembered Me
Drees wind or lee in a far countrie—
 Alas ! alas !

O drift my bark where earth's Lethe's—
 Ye westlin' gales—
Hold memories of thee far owre the sea,
 Auld Castled Hailes !
Fareweel this day, fareweel for aye—
 Fareweel ! fareweel !

AULD HANSEL MONDAY.

Whan grim King Winter hauds his reign,
'Mang trains o' gloom appearin',
Auld Hansel Monday comes again
Wi' routhy mirth an' cheerin' ;
His look is like the Freend o' Man's—
To auld and young endearin' ;
A haill year's walth is in his han's—
He scatters without fearin'
To a' this day !

His bags are fou o' wondrous cheer,
His social face is glowin'
Wi' heartfelt glee—tho' whiles a tear
Doun his fat cheek is rowin'.
On happy auld langsyne thinks he !
But shortly does it tout him,
For auld Scots hospitality
Mak's a'thing roond about him
Blythe, blythe this day !

Hail, merry morn ! the puir man's day !
When furth the cottar's fowre wa's
Care packs him aff' without delay
To girn in touns his puir cause !
Then ilka en', Jock's butt and ben,
The lightsome foot on floor fa's,
O' rustic joy, nor shy nor coy
When Time a fittin' hour shaws
As now this day.

By screich o' morn the bairns are up,
And loud the auld folk rousin' ;
What draws are donn'd, what sangs are comm'd,
What daffin an' carousin' !

The parritch pat this morn, I wat,
 The mice themsel's may doze in—
 On rarer fare baith rich an' puir
 Do deeply shute their nose in
 Wi' joy this day !

Our wames appeas'd, the young an' stoot
 Maun graith them for the shootin' ;
 And mony a queer gun's faitchin oot,
 And bullets ticht to put in.
 Tam shouthers ane like a rain spoot—
 A roostit Copenhagen,
 That "even auld Nick wi' couldna shute,"
 As Pate confides the lug in
 O' Jean this day !

Aff wi' the lads—we leave a while
 The auld folk, bairns, an' lasses,
 Wha, cosh at hame, shall time beguile
 Wi' ane and a' that passes ;
 Sae brisk and bauld we jump the style,
 And for the toun address us,
 Owre wintry roads, for mony a mile
 Thick-thrang wi' maist a' classes
 Gaun lowse this day !

The toun it stands beside a burn
 That loup a rockie linn there,
 And as below the brig we turn—
 Oh, Wow ! the deavin' din there !—
 The Linn, galore, did ramp an' roar.
 And trains and crowds cam' in there ;
 And whalm'd an' whirl'd, and brawl'd an' birl'd,
 And vortex-like did spin there,
 This awfu' day !

The "Red Lion's" fount our drouth maun slake
 Wi' genial Jamie's best ane,
 Syne to the Games, weel-primed, we'll make,
 And see the grand contestin' !
 Within a ring o' hemp an' stake,
 Some chields their claes are castin',
 While shifting crowds around them break
 In laughter loud, an' jestin',
 Richt gleg this day !

In skin-ticht duds o' flannel soy
 They loup, and rin the races ;
 Lang, lang they've practised for this ploy,
 Noo they maun shaw their paces.
 But vain, alas ! Baith man and boy
 The day ere lang disgraces ;
 Few win, maist fa' and sair destroy
 Their braws, or splairge their faces
 Wi' glaur this day !

Hammers, and cumbrous caubers now
 Like willow wands are swingin' ;
 Wi' wild huzzas at each big throw
 The startled lift is ringin' ;
 But we maun go—the targets, ho ;—
 And leave the giants flingin'
 Their shafts an' dread bolts to and fro,
 Like Jove, some great god bringin'
 To grief this day ;

“ Three shots a shillin' !—bleeze awa ;”
 A sturdy auld carle cries us,
 As we draw near the butts in fear
 O' burstin' guns' surprises ;
 “ A muckle cheese, twa chairs and a',
 Forbye some tea, 's the prizes,
 Ma faith ! he is nae man ava
 Wha comes an never tries us
 Ae roond this day ;”

Dick shouthers first the trusty gun
 That craw-herd Johnnie lent him
 (Wha chuckie stanes wi't, mony a pun',
 Aft 'mang the sprugs had sent 'em)
 He took a lang and deadly aim
 At the bull's e'e forment him,
 Syne steekt his een, an fired as game,
 As gin his lass ahint him
 Look'd on this day.

Whare did the wayart bullet speed ?
 Gae speer in Beanston Valley ;
 The muckle target, right aheid,
 It cleared as clean 's a swallow ;
 Tam neist for Copenhagen paid

His last bob—but, puir fallow,
 Not even a lowin' clout to 't laid
 Could coax a single volley
 Frae it this day.

Lang, lang, wi' freendly joke an' crack
 The crowd gart muskets smack there,
 But gif the target ere ane strack
 We didna stey to mak' sure.
 On leaving, as we keekit back,
 All huge in white and black there,
 It stude, defyng the haill pack,
 As lairge, and as intack there,
 As Sol this day.

Sune ran we hame wi' anxious haste
 For our grand Hansel denner,
 Pork chops and dumplins, sich a feast,
 A boon for saunt or sinner.
 Our country core were a' weel braced,
 And wearyin' to begin her ;
 The board's richt eithly served an' graced
 That's spread for health an' hunger
 Like ours this day.

The furious onslaucht, knife and fork,
 Was a' owre in a whuffly,
 Sae weel our tusks an' talons work
 In this wee glorious jiffy.
 At Prestonpans his Hielant dirk
 Nae clansman plied mair stuffy,
 Than did our lads their wapons jerk
 Among the creesh an' taffy
 In lochs this day !

And aye atween the stechs galore
 We pree the tither drappie,
 To synde the gusty mouthfu's ower
 And clear our claggit crappy ;
 Ilk lad and lass their glasses pass,
 And touzzle owre the nappy
 The auld folks see, but let a-bee,
 And wyte the time sae happy
 For pranks this day !

When toasts were dune and things aside,
 In stumps auld Andrew Brodie,
 Wha in his oter like a bride
 His fiddle braucht, blythe body ;
 He screwed her up wi' conscious pride,
 And rosin'd her that snoddy ;
 He saw'd us aff sweet Delvinside,
 Like Gow, inspired wi' toddy
 And sneesh this day !

Then soon wi' reels and waltzes even,
 The wee cot hoosie dirled,
 As a' the blasts o' yearth an' heaven
 Were 'gainst its boukie hurled ;
 Braw lads and lasses lap and skirled,
 Bang men, and folk wha's striven
 Man's number'd years in this hard world,
 Cried, "heuch !" like warlocks driven
 Clean gyte this day !

But daffin jigs, an' sangs, an' tales,
 Sped far too swith the hours on,
 For freends were met whom morrow's gales
 Must waft apart life's course on
 Anither year, and maybe ne'er
 Again while time's flood roars on,
 Micht they e'er meet, or even greet,
 Abune this world's horizon,
 Tho' here this day !

Strange hopes and fancies fill'd each heart,
 A wild fond sadness moved us ;
 We lingered lang—sae laith to pairt ;
 And the "farewell !" it proved us.
 But blessings on that Hansel ploy,
 Still it the mair behoved us,
 To pray the Powers—for oh ! what joy
 It braucht wi' those wha leved us,
 This matchless day !

[NOTE.—Hansel Monday, the first Monday of the new year, is equivalent to Boxing Day in England and America.

Auld Hansel Monday is the first Monday after the 12th of January, the New Year's Day in old style. Both days have the same signification. The way that Auld Hansel Monday originated we are told, was this. Before the Reformation there were certain well-defined and marked holidays and festival seasons, and Christmas, or Yule, was the chief one. At this period in feudal times it was customary for the lord of the manor to present his retainers with a "box," or gift, hence Boxing Day. At the overthrow of the Papacy the stern Presbyterian divines proved themselves so zealous for the cause of the new faith that they even forbade their flocks to observe the old holidays. Christmas, it was given out in every pulpit in the land—was to be obliterated at once. Every good man, and every matron or maiden, was commanded to be at the plough, or to bring the spinning wheel and work at it before the eyes of all men at the cottage door on that day—defaulters to sit on the creeper stool for three consecutive Sundays. The very buskings of Popery were to be burned up and not a visible shred to remain. In pity, however, those ardent theological reformers, for the loss of the old Yule, humanely granted their devoted followers a gift, or hansel day, which they appointed should be the first Monday of the year, old style. In Banff, Fife, Peebles, and other parts, Hansel Monday—the first Monday of the year—is still in a fashion observed, but it is only in East Lothian, and in a part of East Lothian only, that Auld Hansel Monday is recognised and observed in anything like its pristine glory. It is there a hallowed, an almost sacred, name to East Lothian men, women, and children. Auld Hansel Monday! With it, the very name, are associated feelings, and thoughts, and fond longings and yearnings of the human heart peculiarly. With it also are associated the tenderest memories of the family and the fireside circle, and every home tie that a loving heart holds dear. From the loud-sounding, sense-confounding busy cities come the servant girls, the shop boys, and the artisans, back to their native calf ground. Whole families are re-united, and here and there, alas, there is one amissing. In the rapid glance of the eye,

in the hurried, vigorous, grasp of the hand, untold volumes of well-understood meanings, are conveyed by Scottish men and women from one to another on Hansel Monday morning. Long-suppressed feelings have this day an outlet. In Linton the streets, from an early hour in the morning are thronged with visitors. The early trains bring in large numbers of them from almost every conceivable quarter of the country. From the surrounding rural districts come all the forenoon literally crowds of youngsters, well-dressed, respectable-looking young men and "bonnie lassies," and grave, sagacious-looking, conscientious, grey-headed Scotchmen — men, the like of whom can be seen in no other country, men who are at once the stay and the glory of our beloved Caledonia. All these in due time find their way to the Public Park — the scene of the games and the merry-making of the day. The town band is in attendance in their smart caps, and well indeed do they perform the onerous duties which devolve upon them. Sauntering leisurely through the great crowd on the ground with our eyes open, two great facts shortly become apparent. The first is the astonishing well-dressedness and respectability of the people, their grand health and physique; and the other the almost total absence of immoderation in either personal deportment or conduct. After a scrutiny and keen survey, lasting over hours, we come away from the ground with a higher idea of the Scottish character than even we had before—though that idea was not a low one. In the evening we ask the local policeman to tell us the results of the day from his standpoint. His answer is that the conduct of the people was everything that could have been desired. During the whole day only one lock-up had been made, and, on asking if it was a district man, he said proudly, "Na, na; a traveller—a sort of tramp." In other times—not so long ago—it used to be different. In our young days, for a week after Auld Hansel Monday, the streets of our beautiful little town used to be disgraced and defamed by the reeling forms of responsible men and women, in drink, struggling through them. We can now take the pleasure and the merry-making

and the brotherly-friendliness of Auld Hansel Monday temperately, and in good sense and morality. Nothing else is outwardly noticeable in the day's performances. During the day there are continuous dances, sometimes as many as thirty and forty couples being engaged at one time. In the evening, at nine o'clock, the Hansel Monday ball opens in the Public Hall. At this assembly there is generally a good gathering—beautiful women in beautiful dresses, and strong, valiant men swinging them around in the mazes of the waltz or the reel. This goes on till about four or five o'clock in the Tuesday morning. No doubt, in various ways, the memory of Hansel Monday will dwell with all in a style peculiarly fitted to each one's individual experience.]

HIRING FRIDAY.

Like ither folk, I gaed tae toon,
Tae see the hirin' warsle,
Sae thae impressions I note doun
O' this great human hirsle.
Morosely, by a glowing fire,
I retrospect the habble ;
But scorn my soon-suppressed desire
Tae execrate the "rabble."

For while humanity is dust,
And man a vagrant creatur',
Whose mad, daft antics aye disgust
Your sage-deep meditator ;
He isna a' he seems to be
In holiday careering ;
Aft thro' the scum on frowthy sea
The pearly treasure's peering !

Whaur ignorance an' folly meet
Wi' youthfu' glee to prompt them,
What if vulgarity should greet,
An' her dear children compt them ?
The boorish speech, the gait, the leer,
An' mind a blank—we pity ;
Yet what ye lack—God's truth—is here,
Ye shams in toun an' city !

Here simple human nature shows
All unsophisticated ;
Untrain'd, unheeding fashion's laws,
Its yearning heart unsated !
That puir heart worn on rustic sleeves
This day for knaves to peck at,
Is Adam's still—an' joys, an' grieves,
Or plush or purple deck it.

Sae cross'd was I oor man-like hinds
 Tae see sae fuled an' cheated,
 By gallows scamps, wi' tricks an' blinds,
 A schule miss nicht defeated.
 By rill-rail' rogues, whose victims were,
 In a' that decks the wearer,
 Tae sich tag knaves, as Tyneside air
 Tae Coogate reek, superior.

But drunts aside—the ither facts,
 Let us a moment scan them—
 Behold auld Scotland's buirdly backs,
 And shanks that show men own them.
 “Beloved at hame, revered abroad,”
 The “Wall of fire” around her,
 The arm with which she clears her road
 When thick foes wad confound her.

An' lassies sweet as lads are stoure ;
 Braw, cockernonied leddies,
 Wi' faces that wad papists sour,
 Mak' benedicts an' daddies !
 Nae prim-faced, dwarfish, dolly jades,
 That lad or guidman bothers,
 But ticht an' strappin', stately maids,
 Proud Scotland's future mothers !

[NOTE.—This day is a “red-letter” day in the lives of the peasantry of East Lothian—the Hiring Friday at Haddington. From time immemorial public markets for the hiring of agricultural and domestic servants have been common in Scotland and in the north of England. The questions of their utility, desirability, &c., have been long discussed. Is it derogatory, or is it not, to a free-born Briton to expose himself for the purpose of selling his labour to the best advantage before the eyes of all men in a public street? If it be derogatory, then the practice must necessarily be degrading all round, and the workmen in our large towns and cities who come out and hang around dockyards and the gates of manufactories awaiting employment must be put under the same ban beneath which the countryman stands

at a hiring fair. The principle, if in one case, must necessarily and logically hold in all. Whether it would be better that employers should engage their servants and workmen by means of registration, or in any other quiet and private manner, there scarcely, we think, can be two opinions—that is, were it always practicable. There is, without doubt, something exceedingly repugnant to the idea of freedom and manly independence in the sight of bands of men and women standing like dumb brutes in the market place awaiting a purchaser. But this semblance to a cattle market or a slave mart is an entirely misleading one. The instances are really not analogous in the slightest degree. The ploughmen themselves neither see nor feel any derogation to their manhood in attending or entering into engagements in the hiring market. Indeed, both for the ploughman and the farmer, such a custom possesses many advantages. In the first place, for the ploughman it secures at once a day's remission from his ceaseless toil, and the best imaginable opportunity for meeting old acquaintances and renewing old friendships. Moreover, in the market he has the means ready at hand in the presence of his fellows of hearing and finding out all about any place he may be after—his prospective master, &c.—before he finally contracts for the coming year. At the market he learns the current rate of payment, and he knows in consequence almost to a penny what he should ask and what he should receive for his services, which it would be extremely difficult for him to do were any other conceivable system adopted. For the farmer the hiring market also affords a ready, and upon the whole a safe, method of supplying his wants. He needs, say two or three ploughmen and cottars; he goes to the market, meets and sees the men personally, talks with them and their present employers—if he has a mind to—at the same time and place, and completes the whole business offhand, without further expense, fuss, or bother. The real evils of hiring markets are the social temptations to excess which the re-union of so many old friends and neighbours naturally leads to, the too often unavoidable hurry and confusion in which

bargains have to be made, and the bad encouragement they supply to inferior workmen. If a man has the body and the outward appearance befitting a sturdy son of the soil, no matter how shiftless and useless he may be at the tail of the plough or in the farmyard, he may, in the market, with a little push and forwardness, secure as large a wage as the first-class workman. This gross injustice to the clever workman is too often perpetrated, and its perpetration offers perhaps the greatest argument against hiring fairs. But this, of course, with the exercise of more caution, and the expenditure of more time on the part of the farmer, might be obviated; but the inducements to effect a rapid agreement are often so many and urgent that the practical result is too generally what we have stated it to be.

It is impossible to overlook the fact of the absence of combination which there is amongst farm servants. Miners, weavers, artisans of all kinds, and even sailors, have their trade unions and other associations for the maintenance of what they deem their rights, and the advancement of their orders, and furtherance of their several causes nowadays. The farm labourers, almost alone, stand aloof from such societies. Of course there are reasons which can easily be advanced, partly to explain this to the satisfaction of some people. A ploughmen's strike of any length would be a most disastrous matter for East Lothian and the country generally; and, happily, such a dreadful misfortune—so long as the present system of yearly engagements holds—is practically an impossibility, because the moment they struck the men would come under the whip of the law, and render themselves liable to the penalties of heavy fines, and even terms of imprisonment for breach of service contract. If the mode of engagement were the same as that which obtains in the midland and southern counties of England, the risk of such a calamity would be increased incalculably. About forty or forty-two years ago, a large number of East Lothian hinds publicly combined, and, in a manner, "struck." Their object was the removal of the compulsory "bondager." Prior to that

time, every ploughman—every person on the farm who held a cottage as part of his or her yearly agreement, was bound to provide a full-bodied out-worker, or bondager, for service on the farm; and for the cottage itself, this worker—it was always stipulated for—gave twenty-one days' labour in the harvest field, without other charge than the usual rations to the farmer. Where the hind had a "halflin" son, or a grown-up daughter, this iniquitous custom did not press severely; but in all those cases in which a stranger had to be engaged, and taken in, and lodged and fed in the wee cot-house as the "bondager," the enactment was cruelly expensive, and peculiarly galling and annoying to the poor men and their families. One, Thomson, from about Tranent, was the leading man up in arms against this truly obnoxious condition in the ploughmen's lot. On the morning of Hiring Friday 1845 or 1846, all those opposed to the bondager system were invited by messengers to meet him in the East Haugh. The invitation was widely accepted, and a very large concourse of farm people and others assembled at the appointed time and place. Speeches by Mr Thomson and many others were delivered at this unique meeting, all warmly exhorting the ploughmen to prove true to themselves and their families; and a resolution was unanimously passed that all the farm servants present should stand out as one man against the deprecated condition, and not enter into engagements unless their demands were complied with. Bows of blue ribbon were distributed to all the men favourable to the movement. These they were instructed to pin to the lappits of their coats, so that the farmers might see at a glance that their wearers would not hire if the intolerable bondager was sought to be thrust upon them. At the close of the meeting, the men marched in a body to the scene of the market—Market Street, from the Black Bull to the east end of Court Street—and there dispersed. Before the close of day, it was estimated that fully one-half of the men had broken their pledge, and weakly allowed themselves to become bound as of old, through sheer terror that if they manfully stood out they might at the ensuing Whitsunday become

homeless outcasts. Shortly after this abortive strike, the shrewd farmers wisely settled the matter themselves by conceding the just demands of their men, and now the hated "bondager" system is looked back upon in East Lothian as one of the horrors of a dark and by-gone age.

During this period, and long subsequent to the time of the bondager agitation, the wages of the hind were mainly paid in kind, with a cow's keep for each family. The common yearly remuneration for a capable man was as follows :—£12 in cash, $\frac{1}{2}$ boll potatoes planted, or 1000 yards, 9 bolls oats, 4 bolls barley, 1 boll beans, a cow's keep, or £5 in cash, and a free house and garden. The usual wage of outworkers was 10d per day throughout the year, and a firlof of potatoes planted. Within the last twenty years the above plan of paying ploughmen has been greatly modified, and in some instances entirely abolished, and a weekly or monthly money wage substituted. The vast majority of the men, however, are now in receipt of a yearly pay of $6\frac{1}{2}$ bolls oatmeal, 5 or 6 bolls potatoes, 1 boll beans, and from £18 to £24 cash, and house and garden, and coals driven free. Liberty to keep and feed a pig, or even two, is likewise generally given. The old and much-prized privilege of cow's keep has now almost universally been lost by the men—which is, we think, an evil almost amounting to a national calamity. The practice also of paying in cash monthly or fortnightly, we think, has been detrimental to the welfare of the ploughmen and their families. Notwithstanding all these too patent drawbacks, however, there can be no question that the general lot of the present-day working agriculturists is a vast improvement upon that of their predecessors of forty or fifty years ago. Houses, wages, educational facilities, social and political position—all these within the period specified have in a manner been quietly revolutionised for our noble, hard-working ploughmen. Forty years ago the social and political standing of our hinds was little in advance of that of the serfs of Russia; they were, in fact, as much ignored politically as the horses which they daily yoked to

the plough. To-day they are recognised, they are enfranchised and free, they are a great party in the State, their vote is courted and sedulously sought for, and the present day ploughman can in literal fact exert as much influence over the Government of his country as his master, or even the laird and owner of the broad acres on which he spends his life and strength in cultivating.

Hiring Friday market, however, despite all these great changes, remains much as it was thirty or forty years ago. We can indicate no great alterations which have been effected in its general characteristics during that period. No doubt the conduct, the demeanour, the customs and manners of the people attending it have in the interval infinitely improved. There is a thousand times less rudeness, vulgarity, rowdiness, and intemperance observable now. In the crowd a drunk man is the exception; forty years ago a perfectly sober man was the exception. Towards nightfall in those days the burgh on a Hiring Friday was a miniature pandemonium, and bloody battles between young intoxicated linds enlivened every street of the town. All this has now happily passed away, we hope for ever and a day. The other aspects of the fair are much on a par as they appeared long ago. Perhaps the numbers who habitually frequent Haddington on a Hiring Friday, are greater now than they were then—we are inclined to think, much greater. We have been intimately acquainted with this celebrated market, off and on, for about seven-and-twenty years, and we do not detect much difference in the fairs of the present and those of our early days. During the last few years, it is thought by some observing people, that the market has not been as numerously attended as in the immediately preceding years. However that may be, there can be no doubt that the Hiring Friday market in Haddington is still, for the rural population at least, the one event—the great day of the year—that which is pregnant with the happiness or misery, the weal or woe, the destinies of thousands of human beings in a high and peculiar degree.

On Hiring Friday, by early morning, every farm "toun," every hamlet and village almost in the county is astir with many of the inhabitants dressing and busily preparing to take the road. They who live along the line of railway come in by train, but all those who dwell in the upper regions of the county must perforce trudge the distance on shanks-nagie, and long distances too some of them are. From about Duns, Longformacus, Blackshiels, Lauder, and Upperkeith, come the plaided, dog-attended shepherds, in company with the douce, tweed-clad, industrious tillers of the soil. Every road, lane, and bypath, debouching from the hills and the cultivated fields into the capital of the county, swarms with its quota of rustics—all pacing on and vigorously pursuing their way marketwards. By ten or eleven o'clock at the outside, they have all arrived. What an assemblage they are. Hard tillers, sons and daughters of the soil, rural people of both sexes and all ages and degrees. They constitute the pith and pride, and are the mainstay of their country—its inexhaustible fountain of life and strength. But for them our marrowless city populations would degenerate and die away in a few generations.

TESTIMONIALS TO PROVOSTS :

A DREAM.

When I had read the ell lang list
O' names o' them wha *did* persist
 To gi'e a gift to Brodie,
I slippit canny aff to bed
An' fell a dov'rin'—sair bestead
 An' rack'd in mind an' body ;
I didna mind the "uncos" lang
 That Friday nicht, I trew !
"Births, Marriages, an' Deaths"—an' "sang"
 An' "jokes" (a motley crew !)
Gaed whummlin' an' jummlin'
 In riot thro' my brain,
Till sound sleep did me steep
 In Lethé's stream again.

But faigs ! nae mair than ance or twice
I hadna snored, whan, in a trice,
 An' distineck in a dream,
An ancient carle before me rose,
Whase features—tousie heid, an' nose—
 'Maist like my ain did seem.
Quoth he—"Son Sam ! tak' ye nae fricht,
 In peace look me upon ;
I'm come tae ha'e a crack the nicht—
 Hear me, my Famous Son !
Auld Dauvid, your braw lad,*
 Lies sair upo' my heart—
To wham ye nae gift gi'e
 For a' his great desairt.

* David Stevenson, Esq., ex-Provost of Haddington.

"Roose up, my son, let fly thy wit—
 The curst disgrace nail to the bit
 Till Loudon gins for shame;
 Tell o' his great warks 'mang the drains —*
 Tell o' his superhuman pains
 To bring the water hame.
That caller water, saft and clear—
That priceless Chesters Water;
 Than 'swipes,' or 'yill,' or 'table beer,'
 Oh! *hoo* sae muckle better.
 Sae *sure* aye, sae *pure* aye,
 In coggie, caup, or tin;
 To cook wi', to douk wi',
 An' wash the warkman's skin.

"That water triumph, tell him Sam,
 A greater was than ony sham
 Won on the battle field—
 Napoleon, Lord of Austerlitz,
 Nae, your ain Brand, wi' a' his wits,
 To such a feat maun yield.
 At their high best, what did they do
 But tap puir human bluid?
 But Dauvid tapt a stream, I trew,
 That flows for nocht but guid,
 Live-giving, reviving
 The weary mortal man,
 And watering, and scattering
 Wealth, health on either han',

"But when ye thro' the past hae run,
 Mind Dauvid, Sam, o' wark uundone—
 The Railway and the Gas;†
 The Schules, likewise, nicht better be;
 The Streets—the Streets, mair grim to see
 Than Killiecrankie Pass.
 Whan ye gang to the guid auld toun
 Wi' tatties cheap an' fine,

* He was the leader of the party who ultimately succeeded in efficiently draining and bringing a supply of water into the "Auld Toun" at an estimated expense of about a seventh of the real ultimate charge.

† Two other long spoken of schemes of his.

I'm aft deid feart that ye'll clash down,
 An' row strecht intae Tyne ;
 The knowes there, the howes there,
 As ye drive ower yer cairt,
 Do bait me, and thrait me
 Your jaws an' teeth to pairt.

“ And last, but not the least, my son—
 The chief o' a' that's left undone—
 A New Brig ower the Tyne ;*
 The Nungate ane—the shame o' Cairns—
 For dougs may dae fu' weel—or bairns,
 Their bits o' 'cairts' to twine.
 But wow, its back is hump'd wi' age,
 It mocks what it adorns :
 Ev'n Robb, your Antiquarian Sage,
 Its wasp waist passage scorns.
 Sae narrow, a barrow
 It's risky owre't to whirl :
 Whare snobbies an' bobbies
 Dreid sair to meet a churl.

“ And noo, aboot the gift ye'll gi'e :
 Son Sam, appropriate it shid be,
 And worthy o' the man.
 His pietoor ? Pooh ; he kens himsel'
 He is your Local Gladstone Swell.
 What thain ? My lad—aff haun'—
 Gi'e him a bath ! There he may dip,
 An' douk an' drench him weel,
 In that fine liquid precious sip
 He brocht from far a-fiel'.
 'Twill lichten and brichten,
 Far mair than plumps in Tyne ;
 'Twill clean him, 'twill sheen him,
 The mair an' mair to shine.

* A fondly cherished project of his ever since he first held office ; but one, alas, which is not even initiated yet—

“ The best laid schemes o' mice and men gang aft a-gley,”
 Ev'n Provost Stevie's may be seen, a hoax to be.

“ Fareweel, my son ; my date is up ;
Ye ken that speerits daurna clip

 An oor frae aff the morn ;
But at the first craw o’ the cock
Aff we maun pack, like tod or brock,
 To our dark mystic bourne.

Ta-ta ; I’ll see ye sune again,”

 He waved his hand an’ fled.
I turn’d mysel’, an’ oped my een,
 Syne bounced strecht up in bed ;
How, Lord ! then, I roar’d then,
 An’ fair wi’ mirth did scream ;
An’ cough’d lang an’ laugh’d lang
 To find ’twas a’ a dream !

POETIC SAVAGERY, OR BESPOKE EPITAPHS.

I.—For the “G.O.M.”

Here, beneath this high but sad stane,
Is graff'd, at last, oor Willie Gladstane ;
“Glib-gabbit Willie, glib nae mair ”
(This warld cried oot) “ My heart is sair.”
For fifty year ye dinn'd an' deaved me,
Yet lang I grat when last ye leaved me.

II.—For Ex-Provost St——n.

Oor toun he drained an' watered weel,
Oor drink he watered tae ;
But owre Tyne water a' his skill,
A new brig couldna lay.
That sair, sair problem play'd the deil,
An' brak' his hairt in twae ;
That he was but a mortal chiel,
He saw, syne slipt awae.

III.—For Jock Little.

(This epitaph has been called for.)

Lang Jock Little, mucky an' muddy,
Toddled aboot wi' his wee white cuddy ;
Noo, here he lies, as deid as a herrin',
An' the cuddy, its grave lies also therein.

IV.—For R. B. H.—e, M.P.

O, death, thou Unionist an' villain,
Tae gang wi' thee I wasna willin'
I said I'd raither stump wi' Dillon.

“Na, na,” said thou, “come on wi’ me,
 Thou subtle Gladstane, fly Q.C.”
 Sae whupt me aff an’ laid me here,
 Deid, cauld, an’ still upon my bier ;
 Where I can ne’er “advance” again,
 Renown an’ votes to win frae men.

V. — For S. M.

(This epitaph was bespoke by a rival savage and
 philosopher—an ass.)

Trenched deep in death’s dark pitchy pool,
 Here lies a double-seer and fool ;
 The first was wicht, the ither crackit,
 Then baith conjoined made—“Mucklebackit.”

VI. — For B. Soloman.

Soloman of Linton, here
 Rests his profound heid an’ queer ;
 The man who “never told a lie,”
 Withoot a word before me lies.
 If “letters” are received on high,
 Nae doot, he’s safe ayont the skies ;
 Till *death*, like Ottar, claim’d the chiel,
 He was a slipp’ry fish atweel.

TO RAB O' THE HILL.

(*A Wee Rhyme for His on "Twa Wee Weans."*)

"They toddle up an' down the stair"—
Your twa wee weans ;
And there they'll toddle evermair—
The twa wee weans ;
The "dainty cherubs" ne'er again
Shall leave fond Memory's sweet domain,
But ever in our hearts remain
Your "twa wee weans."

Fa' blessings down on you an' them—
The twa wee weans ;
They canna help but bless your hame,
Sich twa wee weans ;
To be the dad o' sich a pair
I'd swap a hantle rhyming ware,
Syne point, defiant, dool an' care—
My twa wee weans.

Tho' I'm a stranger to you a',
And your wee weans,
I wadna fear to swear ava
Your twa wee weans
Were bonnier than flowers in May,
Were sweeter than a laverock's lay,
And innocent as lambs at play—
Your twa wee weans.

I fancy noo, an' think I see
Your twa wee weans
Trot but an' ben in merry glee—
Twa rare wee weans ;
Their little cheeks—the budding rose,

Their saft blue eyes—the violet shows,
 And snawy white the scrapp brows
 O' your wee weans.

Their daddy sits and bids the wife
 See their wee weans,
 And prizes higher than his life
 Their sweet wee weans ;
 For them he'll act the man, and be
 A sturdy struggler, firm an free—
 Nae weakly fool shall faither ye—
 My twa wee weans.

Fareweel ! my couthie, canty chiel,
 An' your wee weans ;
 I ken your heart beats true an' leal
 For thae wee weans ;
 I havena felt for weeks afore
 As when your rhyme I read it o'er—
 They moved me to the vera core,
 Your twa wee weans.

IN PRESTONKIRK CHURCHYARD.

MARCH 12TH, 1888.*

The eastlin' wind blew cauld an' keen,
 The auld Kirkyaird was clad in snaw ;
 But eastlin' wind an' snaw, I ween,
 That day I neither felt nor saw.

* Alexander Lumsden, a singularly strong natured and very remarkable man, the father of the scribe, died at East Linton, on the 9th of March 1888, in his 88th year.

My heart was in a coffin there,
Slow sinking down an open grave ;
The wide world might be foul or fair
For me, sae sunk in sorrow's wave.

I kenn'd the king that coffin held,
As nane on earth could ken like me,
An' loyal love would not be quelled,
An' death but quickened memorie.

My thochts, like birds, winged thro' the past,
Dead summers blossom'd green again ;
I saw the king, baith firm an' fast,
Enthroned among his fellow men.

The sceptre in his hand, it was
The carle stalk—integritie ;
His croon was truth, an' for his cause
He claim'd the friend of right to be.

Wi' stern, but kind and valiant mien,
Owre life's high-way he marched alang ;
Whate'er he wist, he gain'd, I ween,
Wi' resolution fix'd an' strang.

But sicker ills pursued the king,
His lofty crest was stricken low
A thousand times, but nocht could bring
That regal heart despair to know.

Thro' wreck an' ruin, woe an' want,
Wi' nerve unslacked, he held his way ;
Nor age, nor pain, nor death could daunt
That matchless spirit to this day.

Wi' breaking hearts we leave him here,
Oh, may his sleep be deep an' blessed !
For never on earth's rounded sphere
Did truer man or stronger rest.

AT A BROTHER'S GRAVE.

(It is now fully twenty years since when—a mere boy—the following lines were written. They are now revised.)

Here is the spot, “Wee John,”
Whare, forty years a-gone,
Thy little “chest o’ ashes” low was laid;
An still thy grave is green,
Auld playmate, billie, freen’—
For green thy life, by death, was nippit bud an’ blade.

O lang, lang hast thou lain
Wi’ thy heid aneth this stane—
Thon wee toosie heid that nichtly coor’d by mine;
Gin I thocht I’d see’t again,
I wad long for death as fain
As thou long’d to meet “Sam” comin’ frae the schule langsyne.

I start, as frae deep sleep,
Woke by the plaintive “weep”
O’ a restive crested plover circling near;
Tho’ the cry was scarce divine,
Did I sin to deem it thine—
Pealing to me down the ether words of cheer?

For John, wee, seraph John—
Thou mayest be hovering on
Thy spirit wings of light o’er this grave!
Lost in the moaning night,
The saft sough of thy flight
May around me murmur sweeter than the gentlest summer wave.

But rather John, that cry
O’ the wailing lapwing by,

Speaks to my heart o' days lang, lang gane ;
 When the fever struck us twa,
 An' thou wert ta'en awa—
 Ta'en awa to this wee grave a' thy lane.

 O God, naebody kent
 How my laddie-heart was rent—
 How it bled, an' stormed, an' pray'd, an' bled again ;
 How the barrow in the rack
 Was kept till "John comes back,"
 And twa little pairs o' shoon were hidden a' in vain.

 But Time, that scathing woe,
 Hath given a calmer glow,
 Till a sad set star it seems in Memory's dome—
 To beacon, John, the way
 To thine azure fields of day,
 For this grave is but between us till I come.

LEAVING LINTON.

(WRITTEN FOR A FRIEND.)

The sun shines owre yon grassy lea,
 Whence singing laverocks spen' on high ;
 An' flocks an' herds, sae peacefulie,
 Move here an' there, or wearied lie :
 A' Linton glitters in the glare,
 An' gladsome blink o' bonnie May ;
 And licht o' heart is ilk ane there—
 Tho' I maun leave't this Term Day.

And I will never see it mair,
 Oh, never mair again, again !
 O wearie me, my heart is sair,
 To say fareweel to a' I ken.

The auld kirkyaird, the water side,
 The jumping trouts, the siller saughs ;
 The rockie Linn an's gushing tide,
 Tyne's banks an' braes, an' bonnie haughs.

I daunder dowie thro' the street,
 I stoiter weary up and down ;
 A tether's woond about my heart—
 The tither end o'ts roond this toon.
 Oh, bitter fate, that I should dree
 My last day here in maiden prime,
 And forsake a' that's dear to me,
 Or e'er will be this side o' time,

Yestreen I wandert to the Law,
 I clamb again the waly brae ;
 I kenn'd it was the last o' a'
 The times that I that clim' wad hae.
 An' wasna my een wat to see,
 An' wasna my heart wae tae feel,
 How bonnie is oor auld countrie,
 An' how I loe it a' sae weel.

I've gane to a' where roond aboot—
 To auld Hailes Castle grat fareweel ;
 Wi' breaking heart an' lingering foot,
 Pressmennan left, an' bonnie Biel.
 An' Binnin' Wood where aft I stray'd
 Wi' Jamie in the dear langsyne ;
 The Auld Wa's, Roond Taps, an' Langside,
 Pencraig, an' up an doon a' Tyne.

And noo, this warld hechts nocht to me
 But the sad memorie o' them a'.
 O Linton ! what wey sid it be
 That I frae thee maun shog awa' ?
 Here, in thy dear lap, wad I rest,
 Here, in thy bosie, live an' dee—
 My native nook, my native rest—
 But fate says, na, it canna be.

T W O S C R A P S.

I.—IN PRESTONKIRK CHURCH.

By the river, flowing sweetly,
In the time, when, bright and featly,
 Young May cam' to braird the corn,
And it upward sprung to greet her,
Gleaming green, and fresher—sweeter,
 In the dew o' early morn !

Doun the gate I quietly daunder'd
To the Kirk, and sadly ponder'd
 On the lives o' rich and puir ;
The peer and peasant in their hames,
The pomp and poverty that shames
 Alike their joy and care !

When lo, the Kirk ! sae heichly cantled
On its knowe, and ivy mantled,
 'Mang the tombs fu' sacredlie !
Large an' hamely 'tis—nae feature
Grand or gorgeous, nor in stature
 As our " Lamps " o' Lothian be.

But if here Man's works be barren,
Fairest Nature doth adorn
 Matchlessly the hallow'd scene !
Wood and water, corn fields fertile—
Teeming with luxuriance—kyrtle
 This God's Acre like a queen !

Now the worshippers draw hither ;
Men and women, a' thegither,
 Fill the House o' God within.
Hark ! their Sang o' Praise they're singing,

From frail sinfu' hearts 'tis winging
To the God who hateth sin !

Next the shepherd, young and fervent,
A true leader, and Christ's servant,—
For this great flock rev'rently,
With no mock ecclesiastic,
But, with heart-born words, makes plastic
Their souls' wants to soar on high.

Then the Inspired Word he readeth,
Earnestly, as when he pleadeth
At the Divine Cross for man :
A' about the auld devices—
Offerings and sacrifices—
Needful in Jehovah's plan.

Anon the sermon. Whare the text was,
If in Psalms or Eccles'astes—
Haith ! I really have forgot !
Surely, surely 'twas from David—
But as I its gist have sav'd,
Book and chapter matter not.

From the simple words—"Then let us
Into the Lord's House beget us,"
Such a theme's developed
Of fresh thought and reasoning subtle—
Yet true Gospel ring and metal—
Paul seems risen from the dead.

Logic, eloquence—ay, passion
But devoid the clap-trap fashion
That obtains with narrow minds ;
Sensible—and credit craving
Only for what's worth believing—
Ev'ry word a heart-home finds.

Leeze me on such halesome preachers ;
Best exemplars—helpers--teachers,
Leaders fraucht with God-like powers,
On the Master—all reliance ;
Hand in hand with sense and science—
May such priests be ever ours !

II. --AT HOME : MIDNIGHT.

The fire burns dimly in the grate,
 The lamp upon the table—so,
 As I sit questioning my fate,
 Neither in joy nor in woe ;
 I know that I must surely die,
 But what death is I cannot tell ;
 No surety unto me draws nigh
 Beyond the dead man's fun'ral bell.
 But I have hope, and hope means life,
 For all the tongues of Nature say
 That naught is useless—so this strife
 A calm Hereafter may repay :
 If that hope's false, this Universe,
 To all mankind, is but a curse.

AT THE AULD ABBEY BRIG.

(BELOW HADDINGTON.)

Sae as thou wert langsyne,
 Braid-sheeted, gleamin' Tyne,
 Thou sweeps this hallow'd scene o' my life's early morn—
 Aye still the same fair stream,
 Tho' sair, sair's changed life's dream,
 An' I'm a stranger grown i' the place whare I was born !
 As ower the brig I gaze,
 I'm lost, as in a maze,
 While the gloamin' breeze comes soughin', like the sound o' the
 dead past ;
 And in the river clear,
 Dim, dusky shades appear—
 The forms o' friends departed, by memorie fond recast !

The weel-kenned banks I scan,
 The woods on either han' ;
 The glimmering " Cascade," like a fair vestal's sheen ;
 The auld mill an' the weir,
 The kirkyaird lone an' drear—
 The white-wa'd ancient clachan, whare sae happy I hae been !

Aneath me is the " Green,"
 And the dark, deep pool wherein
 I hook'd my maiden trout ae memorable fast-day ;
 Wi' nervous joy an' fear,
 Owre head I whisk'd him clear—
 High through the middle air, some twa score yards away !

And there, by " Corbie Wall,"
 Grew the spire-like spruce tree tall,
 From whase cloud-stabbing tap I shook the May morn dew,
 Reiving a starling's brood,
 When, in owre careless mood,
 I slipt my daring perch, an' swith cam' down, I trew !

But ilka bush an' tree,
 Bank, brae, an' grassy lea,
 To Sam's foud sorrowing heart reca's its tale o' yore ;
 To him a' Nature here—
 Yearth, lift, an' atmosphere—
 Are loaden sick wi' memories o' the " days that are no more !"

Whaur's a' the auld folk flown,
 That, thirty towmonds gone,
 Ca'd this auld village " Hame," ere its last glory fled ?
 Saved wi' the wreck, not ane
 Alas ! is left behin',
 Upo' the final exodus ae mournfu' gleam to shed !

It's Worthies, weel I min' !
 Shae-cobblin', " Auld Corrine !"
 A veteran Peninsular, wha focht wi' Sir John Moore—
 How keen was he to tell
 O' the nicht his hero fell,
 When on pension days he quaffed a dram, and loud for " grief "
 wad roar !

" Dick Scott !" wee " Sandie Baird !"
 " Auld Steele !"—anither caird

Frae that red pack o' Mars that o'er-ran Waterloo ;
 But, wou ! nae sot was he—
 Owre stern an' prood to "spree,"
 He strode a "soldier" to the last, majestic an' true !

Noo, ane an' a are gane !
 Fled, scatter'd, dead—alane
 Here on the Brig I stand, an' muse on life an' death ;
 The murmuring stream below
 Wails like the voice of woe,
 As I turn and face the wide warld, an' its lowering sturt an'
 scaith !

TO AN ASPIRING ELDER.

(On hearing a rumour that the kirk bell was cracked.)

Losh elder, this is awfu' news—
 Far waur than war wi' the Zuloos ;
 Upon the patriotic broos
 O' Mucklebackit.
 Grief broods, like houlet in the blues—
 Oor kirk bell's crackit.

O' waefu' day, O waefu morn,
 When, like an auld sark it was torn ;
 O black, black day, wi' hate an scorn
 Thou'rt retrospeckit.
 Nae Linton bard thy fate does mourn—
 Oor kirk bell's crackit.

Frae ony standpoint ane can view it,
 The crack's a fearsome fack, seen through it,
 Lord, what 'twill cost us to renew it,
 Or, better mak' it ?
 The toun clock was as child's play to it,
 Sae rent an crackit.

O wearie fa' that wae fu' day,
 Tho' Sunday 'twas, it gaed in twae ;
 Oh be its memory curs'd for aye
 And chaos whack it
 Into oblivion, *sans* delay—
 Oor kirk bell's crackit !

Sin' seventeen hunder it has rung,
 An' loudly as a corbie sung
 Weekly to kirk the auld and young,
 Wi' jangling rackit ;
 Noo, like an' auld wife's pan, its dung,
 An staved an' crackit.

Had it but been an' ord' nar bell,
 Some jingling city article,
 That tingled in a belfry cell
 Whaur doos are cleckit,
 Sma' need 'twere Sam to yelp or yell,
 Tho' ten times crackit.

But save us a', oor ain kirk bell,
 Oor cherub tongued, oor nichtingale ;
 Mair rich, sonorous, musical,
 Than gong or backit ;
 A driedfu' loss oor lugs befel
 When oor bell crackit.

Oh, elder ! an thou lo'est peace,
 Nor wad thy days in discord cease,
 Be up an' doing in thy place—
 Bang up an' talk o't ;
 Tell a' the session to their face
 Oor kirk bell's crackit.

To ring oor great folk from a-fiel'
 Into the fauld, when kirk days steal
 Owre this Tyne vale they loe sae weel—
 Tho' snobs detrack it—
 A new bell maun be coft wi' skeel—
 The auld ane's crackit.

The heritors, likewise confront,
 Fear not their high decisive “drunt ;”

Stand up! be nat'ral, brief, an' blunt,
 Howe'er they tak' it;
 Declare a new bell they must mount—
 The auld ane's crackit.

Oor just demands thus fearless tell,
 Let a' opponent's mind themsel';
 Leave such aside, strike for the bell,
 Thy life's goal mak' it—
 Win us a chime shall far excel
 The ane that's crackit.

Sae, elder, shall thy fame descend,
 Like a brave bark, till time's far end
 Shall with the "etern" hereafter blend,
 Unmark'd, untrackit,
 Thy figurehead an' legend—kenn'd—
 A kirk bell crackit.

ON MR ROBERT SHARP, HOTEL PROPRIETOR,
 LEAVING LINTON.

(Read on the occasion of the Complimentary Supper, 7th December 1888)

What driedfu' news is this I hear?
 Is Robin that we lo'e sae dear—
 Is Robin Sharp, wha has nae peer
 For quenching drouth,
 Gaun off to leave us, clean and sheer,
 In waefu' truth?

For thirty years to oor wee toun
 He's been, I trow, nae little boon;
 A' oor sad cares did Robin droon,
 Day after day,—

Wi' "nips," or caups of foaming broon,
Rare barley broo !

Of a' your nappies, cheap or dear,
Frae champagne down to tip'ny beer,
Nae saps ava like his could cheer,
And warm oor heart !—
Oor every mortal care and fear
They gart depart !

On market nichts when we drew nigh
The railway brig, forfocht an' dry,
We'd say, "in Robin's by-and-bye,
We'll ease oorsel's,"
Syne hoo oor mouths wad watter—my !
Like muirland wells !

On cattle market days, his hoose
Was like some great lord duke's lat louse,
The southern dealers, yamp an' crouse,
Wad stech an' denner,
As in the days o' auld king Bruce—
To Scotland's scunner !

The serving lasses raced an' ran,
Upstairs an' down, to haud them gaun ;
They daur'dna for a moment stan'
Their breath to draw ;
If ane pat aff—faith, Robin than
Shored her the law !

On Hansel Monday afternoons,
Lord—lord, to see the country loons ;
They swarmed like bees owre a' his bouns,
And at his board,
His yill an' wheich—they swallowed tuns,
An' sang an' roar'd !

But noo waes me ! he shies awa,
Nae mair for us oor nips he'll draw ;
The auld hotel, sae trig and braw,
He'll tend nae mair ;
Below Auld Reekie's castle wa'
He seeks his lair.

Weel, weel ! he was a sonsy lad,
 Gash, fair an' fat—ne'er sour nor sad,
 But smiling aye—richt fain an' glad
 A freend to greet,
 And shake his hand, and joke like mad,
 And stand a "treat."

Noo he has won his meet reward,
 May he for mony a year be spared
 To weet his mou' and wag his beard,
 An' tune life's harp ;
 Weel on thee is this supper wair'd
 Douce Robin Sharp !

SONG.

*(Sung at the Inauguration Meeting of the Linton Jubilee Town Clock,
 March 31st, 1888.)*

" Now's the day and now's the hour,"
 See our Town Clock in her tower,
 Hear her toll the time wi' power,
 And melodiouslie !

Here's to Linton lads, sae fleet,
 Here's to Linton lassies sweet,
 Here's to those wha ne'er were beat—
 And ne'er mean to be !

Bang upon the block they blow,
 When the hot airn's a' a'glow,
 Soon they mak the world to know
 What would Linton hae.

Be it Schules, or Water Warks,
 Spires, or Organs for her kirks,

A Brass Band—that never shirks—
A' thae things gets she.

Now she ca's this Clock her ain,
She her trysting times will ken ;
She'll be 'hauden unto nane—
Whether freend or fae.

Lang may Linton cock her e'e,
Lang her Town Clock clang on hie,
Lang her children—you an' me—
Lo'e her as we dae !

TO THE MAN IN THE MOON.

All hail ! high ancient patriarch—
Antediluvian man,
Wha needed nane auld Noah's Ark
Whan the dreidfu' flude began ;
Wha viewed the waxing storm o' rain,
Nor cared ae pinch o' snuff ;
“ Cah ! lat it rain, droon hill an' plain,”
Quoth thou, “ *I'm* safe enough,”

Whan elfins lea' the brakes an' shaws,
To trip their faery round ;
With howlets in auld castle wa's,
Thou hold'st converse profound.
And whan, amang the stars sae bricht,
The braid moon tak's the field
There, plain, thou look'st, by ghaistly slight,
The device on her shield.

And, sicht o' yearth ! 'tis aft to see
Thy grand career on high ;
A roving Scotch wind blawin' free,

A Scotch November sky,
 The star o' morn blinks i' th' west,
 Bright in its patch o' blue,
 Till, dim owreheid, thou slip'st to rest
 Whan oor Rab yokes the ploo.

Ride on ! bauld Lunar artiste, ride,
 Thy car 's baith gild and brent.
 This warld is thy grand circus wide,
 Thae heavens themsel' thy tent.
 Mankind, thy audience fit below,
 Cheers on with fit guffaw ;
 Thou art their monarch fit, I trow,
 They—thy fit subjects a'.

JULIE-ANNIE.

Nature, robed in snowy white,
 As she is this cold March night,
 Draws again my thoughts to bright
 Julie-annie !

Fair, before my mental eye,
 Lo ! the maiden passes by,
 First of maidens, I descry
 Julie-annie !

In my sad heart's inmost core,
 She is enshrined as of yore,
 Where she reigneth evermore—
 Julie-annie !

From her queen-like, ample brow,
 Jetty locks the breezes blow,
 Screening Grecian bust of snow—
 Julie-annie !

Bright, beneath each fringed lid,
Dewy orbs swim in their pride,
Flashing love on every side,
Julie-annie !

Cheeks, whose lustre mocks the morn,
They thy youth and heart adorn,
For thereon thy heart is worn,
Julie-annie !

Soft rose lips, where sweetness piles
Sweetest bliss in sweetest smiles,
And young love triumphs in his wiles,
Julie-annie !

Thus, and thus before me now
In this night of moonlit snow,
Fleets thy virgin vision so,
Julie-annie !

Sages say all worlds have spun
Ever round a centre sun,
So my fate round thee does run,
Julie-annie !

But thy bright orb's sphere is o'er
In this dark world evermore,
Long, long time it sunk before,
Julie-annie !

THE BRAND OF DUNBAR.*

Tune—"LOCHNAGAR."

Avaunt ! ye poor pigmies, ye fellows like lassies,
With you let the creatures of barbers' shops join ;
Give us o'er our toddy a hero whose mass is
Colossal and gallant, as Wallace langsyne.
Dear Lothiana, how great are thy warriors,
Lambkins in peace, but wild lions in war ;
Against all our foes they are ever true barriers,
For their chief is the dreadful—The Brand of Dunbar !

In council, in battle, or in the sale-ring here,
He towers, head and shoulders, the general o'er all ;
His deeds are a pleasure to write of, or sing, here,
For it seems as Fate spoke when his hammer doth fall.
And, Caledonia, how droll is his nonsense ;
Would that Dean Ramsay had with him a "bar ;"
Then might the Dean have been death-proof in one sense,
If wing'd with the wit of The Brand of Dunbar !

Ye Provosts of burghs, ye Magistrates Scottish,
Drink your fill from the punch-bowls of office and power ;
You ne'er can seem vain, nor conceited, nor sottish.
When of virtue and modesty Brand's such a tower.
When o'er his high top the snow of age gathers,
Oh may the ills of life flee him afar,
As he sinks, full of years, to the rest of his fathers—
Immortal in fame as The Brand of Dunbar.

* Provost of this old, historically-famous royal burgh, and likewise one of the most celebrated and successful of live stock auctioneers in the United Kingdom.

S P R I N G.

FIRST.

Lo, from the south she comes, the faery Spring ;
Trips o'er the snowdrops with a lovesome foot,
For Winter passes 'yond our welkin ring,
And balmy zephyrs round our mountains mute
Whisper her welcome—from the shepherd's lute,
Tuning the wilderness, to the jenny wren
That pipes its small note from this alder's root
(Scarce heard above the wimpling burnie's din).
All nature—man, bird, beast, and insect thing—
Hail, sing, and cry her welcome—peerless faery, Spring !

SECOND.

From the rugged shores of the wayless sea,
To the storm-torn tops of our inland hills,
Kindle our land with the light of thee ;
Glens, plains, woods—and streams and rills,
Busk with thy best—as a poet wills.
Warm back to life, flowers, grass, and trees,
Breathe thy sweet breath in the westland breeze,
Lull Boreas asleep in his Northern berth
And wean from Winter's grasp new joys and spoils for earth.

MARRIAGE LINES!

*(Written at the Celebration of the Happy Nuptials o' Mr Sandy Sellar
and Miss Aillie Lowrie,)**

Now bauld March shrilly blaws his horn
To trumpet in the spring's return,
An' gies the train o' winter, passed
Out owre the north, a parting blast.
The farmer hears his warning ca',
And casts the seed in faith awa'.
The wild flowers feel his subtle breath,
And wake, and smile at winter's wrath ;
The daisy, and meek vi'let even,
Dare the chill blast, and spread to heaven
Their shiv'ring banners, whilk foretell
Sweet spring's approach to down and dell !

And nature animate as weel
His rousing influence doth feel ;
The lambkins owre the greenin' braes
In frolic mood begin their plays.
The laverock mounts to heaven's gate
To lilt his love for his new mate ;
The coupled pairicks "screech at e'en,"
The sparrows chirp the showers atween,
Or flit an' flee, lang straes in mou',
Wi' love an' nests richt thrang, I trow !

The mated mawkins owre the fiel'
Whid after ither, rear, an' wheel,
The lee-lang day ; the rabbits even

* "Sandy Sellar" is a master mechanic on the shady side of life—considerably. His excellent bride—not so young either—is the daughter of a well-known Linton farmer. The story goes in the neighbourhood that "Sandy" courted for upwards of twenty years before he summoned pluck to "pop the question."

An extra share o' spunk are given—
 Alang the plantin' sides they bicker,
 An' funk up their white fuddies quicker,
 Or munch an' map, an' stamp their paws
 Wi' greater gusto and applause;
 While mavis clear, and blackie-bird,
 Doun Tyne's sweet valley blythe are heard.

Such being the micht o' March's power
 O'er bird an' beast, an' tree an' flower,
 What wonder, then, if nature's lord,
 Even man himsel', should feel restored,
 And something of the general heat
 In his thaw'd breast begin to friet!
 In sooth this nat'ral feeling, vast
 An' strange, owre heart o' Sandy passed,
 Ae nicht as sighing he drew near
 The weel-kenn'd dwelling o' his dear.

Quo he, "I've been a wanter lang—
 This nicht maun change or time my sang,
 For I shall strecht the 'question' pop,
 And, from her lips, despair or hope
 Shall seal my fate an' stap my fear;
 This nicht—this vera nicht—I swear!"

Sae strechtway, then, he order'd Johnnie
 To gang direck an' yoke the pownie,
 Whilk, buckled to, awa' they drive
 Wi' cauld wind an' het love to strive,
 Freezing an' burning, oot an' in,
 The lang five miles they had to rin;
 But Sandy, pondering the while
 His manly errand, and the style
 That he'd adopt wi' his dear jo,
 Was stone dead to all else below.

"Bed-fast auld mither lies," thocht he,
 "Whate'er her ailing it may be,
 Sae I'll fetch yont my sweet to see her,
 Syne what I will I may do wi' her;
 And, once for a', as I'm a man—
 Ask her to be my wife aff-hairn!"

The plot, thus deeply schemed, an' laid

In rich fulfilment soon was made
A grand success ! That Friday week
His now "gude-faither" he did seek,
And tauld him hoo an' what he meant,
And, "Oh ! wad he gie his consent ?"

The auld man fidget, syne blunt his mind
He spak' richt howe, yet plain an' kind—
"This month," says he, "'s the month o' Mairch—
An unco month for wives to sairch,
But, shure as Mairch love's wind does blaw,
My full consent—ye hae it a' !
Tak' her, my lad, an' mak' her thine—
Ye'll ne'er reproach the day ye twine
Wi' Ailie in the mairrage knot,
But ca't the pearl o' life's lot ;
For, tho' she's dootless younger been,
As you, yoursel', my ancient frien',
(Nae saicret it is I betray,
Altho' I say't wha't shouldna say),
She is a lass weel worth the honour,
By splicing wi' her ye'd put on her ;
She's been reared weel up to the mark,
She kens the nobleness of wark.
'Twas wark that made me what I am,
And she her wark will never shame—
To mak' a sark, or wash ane either,
My faigs, she winna hang or swither.
In culinary maitters, too,
She's great at kail and tatty-broo ;
Or genty things, like pancakes good,
Or stews, or crowdy—wale o' food ;
Or even bried trashtrie for a bairn,
Or bileing eggs, or frying herrin'—
Tak' tent o' me, my word rely on,
Her skeel in a' there's nae doun-cryin'.
She's sich a mistress o' the airt,
She kens the cookery book by hairt.
Yes, yes, my son-in-law to be,
As she ane precious bairn to me
Has ever been, as shure your hame
An' your board end she winna shame.
She's nane o' your Miss Modern schule,

Unfit for spence as kitchen rule—
 Nae simpering, feckless, pretty dolly,
 Compound o' weakness, whim, an folly ;
 To toy a' nicht in drawing room,
 Syne a' neist day to pout an' gloom ;
 But ae douce, mensefu, weel-faur'd queen,
 Can grace the hame hersel' keeps clean ;
 With heid an' hairt sae stock'd to be
 Her lord's fit fallow, fair an free ;
 An' can o' nights, out-owre her seam,
 Mainteen her side, whate'er the theme,
 Be't war, the kirk, or politics,
 Or scand'lous breach o' promise tricks,
 Or craps, or markets, shares, or books—
 The latest novel, or the looks
 O' the last mode, brent new frae Paris,
 Contrived by Worth to deck the dearies ;
 Thairfore, my son, and tae conclude,"
 The auld man spake in solemn mood,
 "Tak' her at once, and my consent
 Have wi' her, withoot grudge or stint,
 For tho' I'm laith to lose her noo,
 My loss, dear friend, is gain to you !"

Awa' ran Sandy, and fell soon
 The news was trockit thro' the town ;
 Rumour, as usual, loused his packs,
 And barter'd guesses in a' cracks ;
 Tho' naething but this truth was there,
 The golden fact—they'd mak' a pair ;
 Whilk, tho' some loons were lees imputin',
 A story stood beyond disputin'.

Sae tailors, cab'net, and mantua makers,
 Pigmen, an' grocer folk, an' bakers,
 Were on the rump o' business ridin',
 Wi' orders for the grand "Providin' ;"
 Wow, what a hubbub then was seen,
 The hoose was turn't frae morn to e'en,
 Intil a show, bazaar, and fair,
 Wi' bedding, chairs, an' crockery ware,
 An' bundles, bales, bend boxes, barrels,
 Eneuch to mak' ane think this warl's
 Owre sair misjudged, owre sair maligned

For sure, when siccan walth's designed,
 For only twa, it scarce can be,
 The rest's sae steeped in misery ?

Howe'er, 'mang turmoil, route, an' roarin',
 The great auspicious day wore on ;
 As day by day the bride grew leaner,
 And day by day the bridegroom keener.

His circulation running mild,
 He grew as restless as a child ;
 Nor sleep nor rest for nights had he,
 And, oh, but he sighed piteously.
 His haill heart being wi' her he loved,
 He thocht the eight-day clock ne'er moved ;
 And roond and roond, an' up an' down,
 He scour'd a' corners o' the toun ;
 Discarding even his urbane manners,
 An' blawing like oor auld mill fanners.
 A raving wretch at lairge ran he,
 Ane fearsome "spectacle" to see,
 Wham neither sneesh nor dram could ease,
 But only made him bock an' sneeze.
 At length—the fates he praised an' thankit—
 Auld time down to this nicht has shankit ;
 An' lang an' last, bridegroom an' bride,
 Are leash'd by Hymen side by side.

As new life opens to the twain,
 May it bring peace to either ane ;
 Syne, serievin', down to auld age gang,
 As rowth an happy as it's lang.
 May cheerfu' plenty boil their pat,
 An' greedy health say grace to that ;
 While truthfu' love's ain pledges dear,
 The girning bairnies fast appear ;
 And till thae bairnies' bairns flock,
 In half scores, roond the parent stock,
 Mak' their hame thine—thou matchless three—
 Peace, pleasure, and prosperity.

THE ADVENTURES OF BENJAMIN SOLOMON,
YEOMAN, IN SEARCH OF A SPOUSE.

In a light grey suit of West of England tweed,
Bedight and garnish'd with kid mits and flower,
Behold our Solomon, rigg'd out on his steed,
Ambling at twilight to his lady's bower.
Behold our "Ben," our annalist of threescore,
The lover of three maids—two of whom "deid,"
He'd replace, like King Hal, with just one more,
To cheer his gouty eld with love's sweet meed,
And warm his wintry nights, now wintry cold indeed.

Miss Park of Spott was in his eye—tho' she,
Eighteen and pretty, had ne'er with him spoke—
If even, in fact, she knew such knight did be
I would not swear by ev'n our Jubilee Clock.
But what was that to Solomon, douce folk?
"Step out, old Floe! what, weak wench daunts me?"
With that, and riding wild, the girth he broke,
And instant from his throne on Floe did flee,
Into a stagnant ditch—a noisome brock to see.

Old Floe, not in her prime—barring in wit—
Grazed by the hedge (as oft she'd done before),
Until her master, Benjie, bit by bit,
His slimy plight did full at length explore,
Then sprawl'd to bank—a ghoul of ooze and grit—
Where long he rubb'd and scrubb'd, himself to fit
For love again: for, being so far, once more
Old Floe he'd mount, and, thereon doing it,
Set out again, like Crusader of yore—
By Sar'cen knock'd on head, much lower for his lore.

Gently he trotted, musing deep a tale
He'd tell Miss Kate "How that his steed, being young,

Had bolted, bit in teeth, leaped fence and rail,
 Torn through forests, crags, and rocks had sprung,
 Like poor Mazeppa's, as by Byron sung,
 Till on a tattie bing she last did fail
 To make one inch more—when he quickly flung
 Him from the saddle, as't had been the "whale,"
 And ran for his dear life, to tell his love the tale."

Miss Kate was in the old lane—doing what ?
 What other Kates have done since beaus would woo,
 When Solomon burst up, broke the lovers' chat,
 And love's sweet spell that held the lovers true ;
 Told his gross lies with hand on heart, and blew
 More monstrous sighs than ever man begat.
 Kate laugh'd, like waterfalls when May is new,
 And thinking "such a lark," puffed Ben so that
 She led him to the house like gander gone distraught !

His sad lorn love tale there he told, and, oh !
 Ere one brief hour, his troth was given and ta'en ;
 Then leaving him, to fetch before he'd go
 A "nip" and biscuit for her weary swain,
 The merry Kate, revolving in her brain
 A merry trick to farce her fa'gu'd vow,
 Tripped to her lover, waiting in the lane,
 And told him, as her laughter would allow,
 The errand of old Sol, and all his lies and show.

Then quickly in the chamber reappear'd
 The maiden with decanter, cake, and all,
 And pouring out a bumper round she veer'd
 And said, "Sweet ; for my love, drink this you shall,
 With one quick gulp place it beyond recall !
 No excuse, darling, can this night be heard !"
 Sol, in the third heaven, and fearing not a fall,
 Pluck'd up the glass as 'twere a queen's reward,
 Stood on his feet, bow'd, drained the tonic gall—
 For it was vinegar—but if he cared
 The tears that streamed his cheeks told rather how he fared.

Then on the doorstep, too, Sol's ardent flame
 Got further quench'd, for, bidding him good night,
 Kate slapp'd his face, that fierier grew for shame,
 Then slamm'd and lock'd the door upon him tight.

He did not choose, but mount old Floe, poor knight,
As down the avenue her steps proclaim ;

But that night's cup he had not drunk yet quite,
For from among the bushes there now came
Kate's beau and others mask'd, to wreak on him their game.

They dragg'd him from the saddle—dress'd him out

A fish-wife from Dunbar, or Fisherrow ;
Remounted him, hand-bound, and legs about
And underneath they warp'd to ancient Floe,
Then cheer'd him forth to find his home or no.

* * * * *

Next morn, at dawn, in Black's field, where both "nowte"

And sheep did graze, ah ! such a woeful "show ;"
Solomon, "in all his glory," midst the brute rout,
Bound high on Floe, a fish-wife, bearded, fresh from love's
redoubt !

AT THE MAUTHOUSE—A RANT.*

Tune—"SHERRA MUIR."

In the Mauthoose—not the "Mad-house,"

Life's sorry browst we pree, man ;

Resolved the cup to sirp it up,

Uncaring what we dree, man.

For what's the matter—wha can tell ?

Or whare we moop or what we mell,

Seeing life, a' round, is but a spell

O' nichts an' days—a weary maze

O anxious troubles, "means" and "ways,"

Which nocht but death can free, man.

* The "Mauthoose" of the rant is the present large malting establishment at the Old Distillery at Haddington ; at which, a few years ago, the author, when in low water, wrought as a "laftman" for many months.

The Mauthoose stands upo' the Tyne
 (A pleasant spot an' braw, man),
 It's "barns" an' "lafts" nae freend o' mine
 Could e'er yet coont ava, man.
 There's "flures" an' "kilns" to mak' the maut,
 An' "lafts" like Louvres, flat on flat,
 An' ane to den "The Bair,"* I wat,
 That never sleeps when Sam her keeps
 But raves an' roars, an' thrates an' threeps,
 As she'd devour us a', man.

The "Mauthouse people" strive an' rin,
 A rampin' rattlin' squad man ;
 But och ! they're men folk a' but ane—
 A sing'lar fact an' sad, man.
 The Bailie he o'erlooks us a',
 An' trocks the maut, an' gies us law,
 A business man without a flaw ;
 And, after him, richt smart o' limb,
 The "Gaffer" hauds us a' in trim—
 A throo-gaun, blythesome lad, man.

An' barnmen, laftmen—a haill herd—
 Clerks, carters, boys an' men, man,
 Flock ilka morning to the yaird,
 Wi' swol'n an' drowsy een, man ;
 There's stalwart Faichin wi' his team,
 A modern Wallace he doth seem ;
 An' young, quill-driving Croal, supreme
 In every heart, withooten art ;
 An' mony mair that name or part
 In this my "Rant" hae nane, man.

Sir Bob the Bold the engine tends,
 A tyke to fume an' flyte, man ;
 He lets ane ken, when ane offends,
 His bark, if not his bite, man ;
 The "Miller" taps the "stores" o' maut,
 Just wecht he gies—aucht mair than that
 Auld Nick himsel' the merest claut
 Could never coax intae the pocks—

* THE "BAIR."—A wicked little, high-speed mill for grinding cummings, so called because its enchanting sound when in motion is supposed closely to resemble a loud and prolonged howl of the aforementioned savage animal.

Na ! tho' he bribed him wi' a box
 O' " Kiln-scoops " new an' white, man.
 Gif that stoure chiel wha fires the kilns
 Should e'er wi' Hornie draw, man,
 Ye lang-faced shams look to yoursels'—
 Ye yet will curl an' thraw, man.
 Auld smirkin' Hughie Hume, whase post
 It is to soop the brock an' dust,
 An' confab wi' the kirkyaird " ghost,"
 Laughs lown an' low, and cries " Oh ! ho !
 If Wilson gets to fire *below*
 He'll sune ghosts mak' us a' man !"
 Wild Neill an' Mossman ploy an' pair
 Like Judy and her Punch, man,
 An' aft some trick concoct to scare
 The 'prentice gaffer, Runch, man.
 Their barrow-hurling—rare to see't ;
 How they rin ither aff their feet ;
 The " Flying Scotchman's " nae sae fleet ;
 But, weel I wate, " Wee Horsey " yet
 Can whup before the haill mad set,
 Tho' his bouk's but a crineh, man.
 These are a sample o' oor stock,
 An' troth, baith rank an' file, man,
 We're muckle jist like ither folk
 In nature, deeds, and style, man.
 Here Sense an' Folly shouthers rub,
 Here Pluck an' Fear doth soar an' grub,
 Here wily Craft doth Virtue drub,
 An' modest Worth, ignored, slips forth
 'Lang here, the same as owre a' earth,
 An' patient waits the while, man.
 Sae here's to maut, an' muckle o't ;
 Lang may our " steeps " be fou', man ;
 To barley bings my fancy clings
 Just less than to the broo, man.
 An' here's a bumper to the " Bair " ;
 Lang may she nobly rage an' rair,
 An' cry for cummin's mair and mair ;
 An' lang may " Sam," her keeper, cram
 Her mou' wi' grist, while mony a sang
 They sing ilk ither to, man !

THE "PIEBALD PIPER."

FIRST LETTER.

FIRST MEETINGS WITH THE PIPER.

I am a rampin', rovin' loon,
Wi' richt licht pouch an' heart ;
Frae Berwick to Brig o' Doon
I ply the piper's art.
At ilka weel-kenned ha' or toun
They never grudge a hame,
To screen from storm when nichts set down—
Wi' freen's to kett the lyart croon
O' " Rare Auld Athie Graeme "

S. M.

In a former work I stated that in my early youth, whilst rustivating, recovering—yet reading ravenously—at home, after a long and unfortunate sea voyage, I one day secretly resolved, as I stood listening to a street ballad singer at a Gifford Fair, to get up instanter a budget of my own heroic ditties, and set forth and sing them at a bawbee a-piece through the length and breadth of Scotland. This eventually I did do—and *succeeded!* Many and strange indeed were my adventures, and the characters I encountered, during those miraculous juvenile wanderings. Hugh Miller, De Quincey, and a host of scarcely less famous men, I familiarly conversed with and sang to ; but these are not the subject of the present letter, and I simply mention them to make my readers *au fait* in the position.

One fine summer afternoon, about three months after the

musical tour had begun, I was sitting on the right bank of the Clyde, immediately under the Castle Rock of Dumbarton, watching the arrival of a river steamer. From the mouth of the Leven, a small boat, rowed by four men, shot out to take ashore those passengers who wished to land at that point. Only some half dozen people left the steamer—one of them being a man who was dressed in a red and green Macgregor tartan kilt. In a jiffey, the huge mother-looking steamer snorted, fluttered her side-wings, and paddled off; and the little boat, which had run out like a child and kissed her, came slowly back, and took ashore like playthings its tiny half-dozen about a couple of hundred yards from where I was sitting. These human toys all set out towards Dumbarton—all but one, the man in the red kilt. I was astonished when I observed him making swiftly and directly for the secluded nook whereon I sat. As he approached, I jumped, startled, to my feet—frightened and dumfounded—for I never before had seen or been in such a mortal presence as this. He was a stout, brawny, yet wiry and active man, of about five and fifty, clad in the ordinary Highland garb, and he carried the bagpipes. But his *beard*! How

“ Wildly tossed from cheeks and chin
The tumbling cataract of that beard.”

It descended from his neck from behind each ear, it waved down from his cheek bones, it swept in luxuriant masses downward from the region where his mouth and chin would be; from the whole lower face, saving the eyes and nose, it hung, it descended in one grand inverted forest down as far as his waist, and nearly as broad across as himself, and the colour of that majestic beard was a *piebald*! Yes, piebald, snowy white and auburn, each individual spot being as clearly outlined and as thoroughly unblended with its neighbour as are the stripes of a leopard or the marks of a tortoise shell cat. Never before had I heard, or seen, or dreamed of such a wondrous beard, although I had long observed all manner and sorts of beards, from the prickly gray stubble upon the wrinkled visage of an old witch, or the downy shade of beauty,

on the upper lip of a fair maiden, up to the shaggy, grizzly, manly beards of the sea kings, and the magicians of old, and the venerable and reverend-looking hirsute facial adornments of the ancient Jewish patriarchs, prophets, high priests, and kings ; and I foolishly thought I was master of them all. But how vain is the knowledge of fallible man ? Here was a beard flowing and waving in broad noon-day before me in massy volumes about the breast and around the shoulders of one of our own living countrymen—one single hair of which I had never so much as dimly conceived. He told me to be still and sit down, and he would explain all.

At first he talked in the west country dialect, and I answered him in the idiom of the east—which, when he observed, he instantly changed his accent to correspond exactly with the sound of mine. In one of my raptures I burst out into a rhapsody of the highest theatrical English of that period. So immediately did the Piper, and he told me that he was the master of (and could speak fluently) five several living languages. He said that he noticed me from the deck of the steamer, and that something unusual about my appearance had tickled his curiosity, and so he had landed and joined me. When I told him that I was singing my way through Scotland for the purpose of visiting all the ancient battlefields and historical places, he suddenly swung himself round, looked long and earnestly in my face, felt convinced, then hoisted me in his strong arms, pressed me to his broad breast, and hugged, and kissed, and wept, and crooned over me like a mother. Thereafter we talked long and fervently about Dumbarton Rock and Wallace. He showed me the place where a few of Wallace's men made the ascent one dark winter night, more than five hundred years ago, to storm and take the Castle from the English. He was chokeful of anecdote and legendary lore. I told him that I intended that night after dark, to scale the rock at the same point as the Wallace patriots had done it. He eagerly tried to dissuade me from this foolish attempt, but found it impossible. "Then," he says, "I'll

gae wi' ye, little Sam, I'll gae wi' ye." After dusk we hired a small cobble boat, passed over to the base of the pyramid in secrecy and safety, and with difficulty made the ascent, surveyed the remains of the old buildings on the summit, and were back at Leven mouth within three hours—counting from the moment we embarked upon our perilous and Quixotic adventure.

We afterwards walked up the river to Dumbarton, got the night coach there, and drove across the narrow strip of country to Loch Lomond, and afterwards supped and slept together at the inn of Rowendennan. Next morning we parted, the piper taking his way to the Western Isles, and "Little Sam" setting out for Culloden and Moidart. Before parting, this wonderful and mysterious man took me by the hand and said—"Sam, I can give you no explanation of the present compound and diversified colour of my diminutive beard. It began to assume the tartan check some four or five years ago, and I am already known over all the north as the Piebald piper. If it don't become unanimous soon, I have half a mind to lie in for a week, hire a couple of expert barbers (or lawyers) and have myself fleeced outright. I guess, little Sam, it would bring me something in the market—wouldn't it?" "Ay. An gin it only could be petrified into wud, an' syne sawn up into thin dails, ye micht mak' a quaigh o' Athol brose aff't for dambrods."

Some fifteen months after this, our first meeting, I was resting one day on a rising ground, or mall knoll, on the southern slope of Fifeshire, about a mile from the northern shore of the Firth of Forth, just after visiting the famous house of Balcarres, where the Lady Ann Lindsay composed the immortal Scottish ballad of "Auld Robin Gray." For many, many long and eventful months I had never once beheld my beloved native East Lothian—to me always the type of the Elysian fields—and I sat longing for the day when I would at last re-enter her almost sacred bounds—when whisht! I perceived a man intruding upon my seclusion, and that man, of all men, none other than the man

with the piebald beard. Strange, strange it was indeed, thus to encounter him a second time so unexpectedly, and at such a moment, and in such a spot. Excitedly rising, I ran to him and cried fondly, "Piebald piper! Is this really you. How are are you?" "All right, little Sam," says he, "how are you yourself?" I thought he'd shake my wrist out of joint, and I had to declare that I believed Lord Raglan to be a greater General than Sir William Wallace before he would let go. Himself and his wondrously unique beard were just the same as when I beheld them last—only he appeared to beam with joy and enthusiasm over our sudden and unforeseen re-union.

After we had related to each other our several narratives, "Sam," he said, "do you see East Lothian over the water? Well, I took my wife out of yonder. Her name was Swag, from Whittinghame she hailed. Such a woman, such a she-devil. Oh Little Sam, let us talk of something else—about your farmers—about anything but Swag. Yes, I am a gentleman—I'll tell you my secret some day—I dare not divulge it at the present time. I am, if not a poet, at least a rhymers; but above all things, Sam, I am a seer, an indicator—a prophet, a prophet not of the future, but a prophet of the past. For instance, long years before Charlie Darwin, by vast scientific study and research, had pierced as far as the Evolution Theory, I, the reputed "Athie Graeme," had prophesied it articulately and audibly at hundreds and hundreds of Scottish firesides. I am prophesying just now the true and exact age and the origin of Earth's first life.

S E C O N D L E T T E R.

FACTORS AND FARMERS.

Thro' the greenland, with sway supreme,
We sang and played our progress gaily ;
And roamed at will by wood and stream,
And strode like Kings thro' strath and valley !
And when at last the day was passed,
We sheltered in some bowrie shady ;
Then deep converse we'd lang rehearse,
On Nature's "uncos"—Lord an' Lady.

S. M.

The singular being with whom I sat chatting on the Southern Border of Fife said that he had just been about the same act as I had—viz., visiting and playing at Balcarres House. Colonel Lindsay (a scion of a younger branch of the ancient Balcarres family) was at home, and from him and the other members of his household I drew, for my musical efforts, a total of 13s 6d sterling. The Piper also, had been pecuniary successful ; but he significantly hinted to me, confidentially, that he was "independent," and needed not the offerings of the people, although, for other reasons, he usually accepted them. At the termination of his rather lengthy rhyming effusion on the "vain young farmer," we immediately arose and walked to Balcarres Craig and Den—two spots of fine picturesque and romantic beauty—and then returned and lay down again in the old nook. Directly from his philabeg the Piper drew a large parcel of bread

and cold meat, wrapped in semi-tanned deerskin, and a big horn or *quaigh* of Athole brose, with which, as the weather was warm and sultry, we decided to camp for the night in a little larch wood which flourished closely behind us. I found this weird and fantastic-looking personage to be a more and more wonderful man the longer I knew him. A genuine Highlander, of mild and fatherly aspect, (despite his extraordinary beard) dignified and benign, he was generous and amiable to a fault when unexcited. When agitated during conversation—as he generally was—it was astonishing how his face, two thirds of which were covered with a thick fell of hair some inches deep, could express his various mental moods, rapidly and vividly, and these moods the beard itself also denoted. If a satirical or a humorous idea flashed for a moment athwart his mental ken, his dark eyes would instantly sparkle with glee, while simultaneously the whole outspread field of his superlative beard would glitter and shimmer with his rich, broad smile. My first impression of him—conceived, I conjecture, by the way he spoke about, rated, and lauded himself—was, that he was a clever man a little affected by insanity. But I early perceived that this first impression was an erroneous one, and therefore discharged myself of it forthwith. Uncommon, or eccentric, he was certainly—very eccentric, sometimes, in his ways of thinking and speaking—but, notwithstanding, his was the keenest, clearest, and profoundest intellect that up to that time I had ever come across. He had the detecting eye of an eagle, and the intuitive certainty of a swallow. And, further, his stores of reminiscences, stories, tales, illustrations, and anecdotes of and about all sorts of persons and subjects, appeared to me infinite and inexhaustible. His fancy and imagination, also, seemed ever ready at his need with a perfect profusion of figures and images. And yet, with all this, his conviction was deep and sincere, firm and sure, he was somehow or other an inspired "*Prophet of the Past!*" From his point of view, this was not an hallucination of an over studious or morbid enthusiast, but the deliberate and assured belief of a philosophic mind in its own transcendent power. Some of his geological and

other scientific backcasts or speculations have since been demonstrated to have been wonderfully near the mark.

Who or what he was, what was his social status, where he belonged, or where he came from, I did not then know. He had told me, indeed, that he was a Highlander, and I saw that he wore the plaid and kilt of the Macgregor tartan—and that was all—excepting that he unconsciously disclosed to me once the fact that he had been, long years before then, both a soldier and a gentleman farmer. He seemed exceedingly fond of talking about farming and farm people, and as we reclined together that beautiful summer evening on the secluded Fifeshire hill, which in the clear and hazeless atmosphere of that day commanded a splendid view of Lothian from Edinburgh to Tynninghame Point, his remarks naturally referred to the agricultural matters peculiarly pertaining to that district. Accordingly, and quite relevantly, I was treated to a long harangue concerning farming in harmony with science ; then to a treatise on the comparative merits of surface and subsoil drainage ; and, lastly, to a bitter and severe tirade on “land factors,” of which the following is the substance, and also the terms, as nearly as I can remember them :—

“There are three varieties of the factor species, Sam,” began the “Piebald Piper,” after a long greedy pull at the Athole brose horn—“first, there is the right man in the right place—a sagacious, considerate, lenient, intelligent, upright, honest man—one who possesses a thorough practical knowledge of farming, and who is desirous above all things to do the *fair thing* alike to his employer and his tenants. May God multiply and increase men such as this, for a surety Scotland needs them sairly. Second, there is the deep, calculating, legal, slow, sure villain—he who would grind without a *swither* a poor industrious suffering family to powder, “for the laird,” as he would say ; that is, Sam, so that he, (the factor) might exalt and benefit himself thereby. I know the heartless, undermining sneak ; beware, Oh, beware of him,

little Sam. He is all butter till the evil day comes, then crash ; he breaks you over the wheel as if you were so much firewood, tardily sent him by a dilatory Providence to illumine and show forth his supreme magnificence and worth. This kind of rural Judas is perpetually using the laird's name, and says always, '*My instructions are*'—so and so. Thus does he seek to cover his cruel and infernal oppression under a cloak of seeming compulsion, while most likely all the time the landlord has never heard even one true word of the melancholy story. I know these rascals, Sam ! and say, *curse them*. Well, the third factor-class comprises the lawyer type—sometimes good and sometimes bad ; it depends on the kind of man. But this class of bailiffs, generally, do immense harm to agriculture, be they *bad* or be they *good*. They are all unfitted for the exercise of a factor's duties and authority by reason of their special profession, training and proclivities, and their lack of the absolutely requisite agricultural knowledge. As well might you ask the Provost and Magistrates of Haddington to perform the duties and evince the peculiar skill of *howdies*, or mid-wives, Sam." "What, Piper, isna a howdie maist aye an auld wife ? an' arena there some auld wives in oor Town Council ? Ye dinna ken oor county toun sae weel's the county itsel', I see, Piper." "Quite right, Punch, but you know my meaning," genially resumed the spotted oracle, "As things are at present, no mere lawyer should be allowed to dictate to or control farmers affairs. I will tell you a story about this Little Sam, shall I ?" "Ay—if its a short ane, dinna spin it as hугe as yer baird," "No more, an' thou lovest me, Hal !"

"Do you observe yon dark forest to the west of Traprain Law ?" "Ay, fine, piper," I returned, "what about it ?" "Imagine a line drawn through the middle of it," he rejoined, "from west to east, and continued easterly a mile or two beyond the forest. Touching upon that imaginary line a little eastward from the forest, do you notice a large white house, conspicuously built upon a rising ground ? Well, that is the farm house of Green Knowes, and was long the abode of John Howe, one of

Nature's own noblemen. Ah, yes, Sam, poor John Howe was altogether an uncommon man—like myself—at once an intellectual giant, and simple and sincere as a little child. Although only indebted to the schools for the most meagre educational rudiments, he read and thought himself deeply into the various knowledge of his day. Industrious and persevering too, to a fault—like me in my young days—it may justly be said that the lamentable misfortunes which darkened and embittered his latter days in Scotland were, indeed, misfortunes in the truest sense, and not mishaps brought upon himself either by his negligence or folly, or his lack of experience as a farmer. Universally by those of his friends and acquaintances who could appreciate unobtrusive, sterling worth and true genius, was John Howe admired and beloved. Moreover, his handiness and mechanical aptitude were as remarkable as was his amazing fund of information, or the cleverness of his countless plans and inventions. Albeit, never trained to any of the skilled crafts, John was a master and a proficient in all the arts and trades of the country, from the clouting of an old shoe, or the mending of a cart, up to the construction of a faultless thrashing mill and steam engine, or a perfect eight-day clock. And all his manifold “jobs” bore and wore the impress of the man himself—thorough genuineness, efficiency, and stability, was their stamp, and they needed no other “trade mark.” Yet this Scottish benefactor—this Man of men, Sam, did little better than fail in his farming, and was compelled to evacuate the strongholds of his existence, and turn his back upon the dear scenes of his laborious and triumphant youth, at the heartless bidding of an upstart lawyer factor—a man who was as comparable to John Howe as an impudent, pilfering jackdaw is to a valuable and a daily-producing dorking hen. How such a deplorable result was effected by such despicable means, it is the object of my story, Sam, to explain. Hark ye! The seed season and summer of the year he broke down in had been backward and very wet, and the vile harvest weather put the head-sheaf on the agricultural load of troubles, and at once over-balanced and over-turned many an already over-

burdened and extortionately-rented man into the slough of despond and bankruptcy.

In such a year the clay-land farmers, of course, suffered most. Howe's farm was two-thirds of it stiff clay, and the remainder heavy loam—the whole of it overlying strata of gravel and red sandstone. Despite the unfortunate character of the weather, however, and in consequence of the state of fertility and cleanness of John's land, his entire crop was an excellent one—the hay crop in particular being one of the heaviest ever grown in East Lothian, and which, by working with the weather, and reaping and cocking only a small portion at a time, was all eventually secured in good condition.

As he had done some dozen years prior to the period I speak of, John sold his hay that season again to his landlord—the new factor personally being the purchaser. I should also mention, Sam, that the four or five previous years had been very dry and sterile—shockingly bad turnip years—and consequently unsuitable for the making or saving of money by the farming community. Hill farmers, no doubt, suffered little by this cycle of "brown summers," for the prices of wool and mutton ranged unprecedentedly high, and the drouth invariably set in just when dry, warm weather is most desired by stockmasters, viz., at lambing time. But for all arable farmers in the Lothians, those years were trying and testing in the extreme, for although on some well-farmed, heavy descriptions of soil capital grain crops were reaped, yet the low prices current for produce were discouraging and unremunerative, and the turnip crop was a complete failure. During those emphatically "bad years," John Howe, without capital as he was, struggled on in his exorbitantly high-rented farm most bravely and cleverly. I say cleverly and bravely advisedly, Sam, for, looking calmly back at his terrible circumstances, I question if a more heroic or a more ingenious battle to make honourably "both ends meet" was ever waged or maintained for so long in East Lothian. A bare ungarnished recital

of the extraordinary plans, and subtle and ingenious shifts which he conceived, and to which in a manner he was driven to resort to keep himself financially above the flood through those long disheartening years, would afford rare instruction and profitable entertainment to many a Lothian fireside circle during the long, dark forenights of winter. And, mind you, little Sam, my dear, all those truly great schemes of his were planned and carried out with the perfect understanding and assured belief that they would never, and could never, better or enrich himself ultimately one single penny. He knew, no one better did, that, to him, without money, his farm from the first was a mistake (a mistake, not of his making, he having only succeeded to the lease, in accordance with Scots Law, after the death of an uncle), a false speculation, a losing bargain. Yet still he schemed on, and wrought and slaved, and wore himself away, both body and brain, night and day, and neglected nought that mortal man could do, or could think of, to keep his position. The "wife and bairns" were to John Howe—their welfare and happiness—just what victory was to the soldiers of Robert Bruce at Bannockburn.

In all this he was greatly aided by a liberal, far-seeing, and obliging factor, a brusque and gruff sort of fellow in his manners, but a man with a brain and a heart. This factor was John's first one, who, despite his gigantic and rough outward semblance, was yet one of the ablest and shrewdest men of business in Lothian. Woeful, woeful indeed, and sad, sad was the day to many a half heart-broken, struggling farmer, ay, and to many a poor labouring man, and to many an infirm and aged pensioner, and desolate widow woman, when "Auld Burton" died. He had an abscess in the nape of the neck, little Sam, and it extended to the carotid artery, and so Burton, the noble-hearted, went under. With him went the last hopes of many, many a long-suffering Scotch family. He was a "swearer," a "rough speaker," a man of no refinement of taste or manner at all; but all the same, little Sam, he was a man of real sense and power,

a genuine, understanding and humane sympathiser with honest poverty. Burton's equal as a factor stands not in the "three Lothians" this day.

Well, Sam, his successor, I may describe, without injustice, as Burton's opposite—physically, mentally, and morally. Burton was of a distinguished—though gigantic and rough—appearance, large, portly, and manly; but Mr Successor was a puny, pale-faced, fragile, contemptuous pigmy, an out-and-out abortion of the *genus homo*. He neither possessed body, brains, nor heart—a mere "pea-hool" he was. Burton was a keen, decisive, clear-headed, few-worded, sure man of business of the guid auld Scotch schule. Mr Successor was a modern haggling, quirky, strainer-at-a-gnat, a wavering, gabbling lawyer. Old Burton! Old, Burton was a rough-and-ready, true blue, plain, down right friend or foe. Successor was a sneaking reptile, an undermining, relentless oppressor. When old Burton gave up the ghost (alack the day!), John Howe was in the very midst of his difficulties; but stop, see ye no', my boy Sammy, hoo the god o' day is snqovin' round by Kelly Law? We maun to camp, we maun to camp, little Sam. I'll finish John Howe's story as we march to Maggie's Burgh i' the mornin'. Gie me a soupe o' the Athole brose, my callant."

Piper, afore I dee, I'll be at the bottom o' ye. I couldna dee afore I kenn'd what ye were. Oh, Piper, tell me the noo, aff-hand! Ease me! I'll tell naeboddy, if ye dinna want me to tell. Come on, dear Piper!" "No, little Sam, not now. Get to bed at once. You will know some day, but I cannot say any more at present. My little laddie, if there was one on earth to whom I would reveal my secret, that one would be my 'ain callant, the boy after my own heart, the little Samuel Mucklebackit.' Couch in, then, and say no more. I am the Piper, and that is enough for thee just now."

T H I R D L E T T E R.

HIGHLAND SUPERSTITIONS, AND LOWLAND FARMERS AND FACTORS.

See us roam 'tween toun an clachan,
Wandering free—nor care, nor bother,
Crackin', singin', jokin', laughin'
Bosom cronies to each other.
Clear the pales of "creeds" and "orders;"
Heart to heart with love cemented,
Mever yet in Scotland's borders
Truer friendship hath life stented.

S. M.

The Piper, who oft-times spoke, not indeed offensively, but as it were simply as a matter of course, in very inflated and grandiloquent terms of his own unequalled mental, moral, and spiritual attributes and capacities, to me—a boy—a mere child, was all the time in reality one of the most modest, and most ingenious minded of men living. With the gravity, and perhaps with infinitely more of the sincerity of a Moderator, he would look at me and say, when in a serious mood, something like this;—"I am an inscrutable and profound philosopher, little Sam. But, and notwithstanding this beard, one of the most loving—ay, and loveable, and unassuming of the sons of men," I believed every word he said. Had he said he was Jove himself, I would have in spirit knelt and answered—"Yes, Great Jupiter."

I sometimes thought that all his grand self-praise was merely a jocular ebullition of his warm and humorous spirit which, no doubt, in one sense it was, although I saw good reason sub-

sequently to modify somewhat this idea, and to believe that all his self-laudatory harangues were really and truly the expression of his deep-rooted opinion of himself. And that deep-grounded and most sincere opinion of himself which he always held, I to this day, and will evermore, hold of the "Piebald Piper" likewise. He was a Man of men—an "out-and-outer," as he expressed it.

In all my musical ramblings I was accompanied from the first start from Scaur Den by a little, shaggy, ugly-looking terrier dog—a "perfect original"—which was uncommonly devoted to me, and which I had whimsically baptised by the weird but appropriate name of "Second Sight." This rakish, but faithful creature—devoted to me in all respects absolutely—was extremely jealous of strangers who became friendly with me, and, if not watched, he would embrace every opportunity of taking a snap at the heels of those who dared to become too intimate with me. If I said, "poor Second Sight" in the presence of a friend, he would wag his indescribable tail, and prick up his lugs; but if I etted so much as to touch my friend's knee with my hand, the jealous dog would go all but mad with vexation and rage. Strange to say, however, he not only made the Piper an exception to this general rule; but from the beginning of our acquaintance on the Clyde, down to the sad and memorable day when we bade each other adieu and eternal farewell, that miserable, red-nosed, blear-eyed, bastard canine—an embodied nightmare almost in appearance, but a "Wallace Wight" in heart—actually appeared to respect and trust the Piper, and would even, without a single growl, allow him to wrap me in his plaid. The Piper was pleased, and even proud of this canine recognition, and it made him esteem and love little "Second Sight" in return. The Piper also, I think, regarded "Second Sight" a good deal for his name, which smacked, and was peculiarly suggestive of, the Highlands, and which, in fact, stirred me to ask him, as we lay down that night in the little larch wood, to the west of Balcarres, in Fife, if he really

believed in such a faculty—or whatever else he might call it—as second sight, or the gift of foreseeing any dreadful event about to happen? In my journeyings to and fro among the wild lochs and interminable mountains of the North, I had met with many so-called instances of its existence and truth, but whether they were actually true, or only pretended, or mistaken as true, I could not say. The Piper at once avowed his belief in it—to my horrible astonishment and disgust—adding that he had scouted and scorned for years the idea of its reality, as the most preposterous bosh imaginable, born of stupidity, ignorance, and infantile superstition combined, until some years previously, at a Highland wedding, his belief, or unbelief, was driven out of him perforce by the certain evidence of his senses. One of the guests at this marriage, he said, was a tall, slim young man, with large, rolling, white-hazel eyes, whom he had hitherto thought to be scarcely *compos mentis*, but to whom was ascribed a high degree of “Second Sight,” by the poorer Highlanders. This young man, during the evening, abruptly stepped up to the Piper, and piteously implored him to pull down his eyelids, as he had just had a “fearfu’ vision.” The Piper laughingly complied, and jestingly asked the young man, who was deadly pale and in a lather of sweat, what it was in all the world he had seen? When I queried him in this light way” said the Piper, throwing himself down by my side, and cuddling up under his out spread beard for the night, “he trembled from head to heel, and excitedly pointed to a middle-aged Highlander of the name of Angus M’Lean, who sat talking at the fireside with the bridegroom. “What of him,” I said, “Hush!” he answered in a whisper, “come into the trance—it is there that I will tell you, Piper!” I stepped into the trance, or passage with the lad immediately, where he told me, seriously and sensibly, that he had just seen in a “vision,” the chair that Angus sat on empty, and that this implied his (Angus’s) early death, either that night or the following day. Of course, I scoffed at the apparently absurd prognostication, for Angus was a strong, healthy, sober, gallant fellow, and one who seemed about the farthest removed

from death of any in the house. He stayed at the house of the newly married couple over night, and left for his home, which was only some three miles distant, about ten the next morning. The road, "track," sheep path—call it what you will, little Sam, along, or across the hill, Ben Venue, was only three miles in length. It ran along the back or northern side of the mountain. There had been over night some hoar frost, and of course when Angus left the marriage scene, now the dwelling of his happy host, the sun, far low down in the south, had not yet had the opportunity of softening the dews crustily lying on that side of the hill. About half way across the path skirts the top of a deep "scaur" or precipitous bank of red sand and basaltic rock, which necessitates the exercise of a little caution by a stranger to get over it safely. But Angus knew this path like the way to his mouth, and had securely passed and repassed over it thousands of times prior to that of the fatal morning. On this fatal day, he slipped on the hoar frost it was supposed, and slid helplessly over the dreadful "saur," four hundred feet in depth. When his body was recovered, it was obvious that death must have been instantaneous. The corpse was headless, and one of feet also was awanting.

Now, little Sam, what think ye of this? I defy you to show how the young seer could possibly foresee and foretell this young man's fatality, by mere, what is called, *natural* ability. And, little Sam, I could adduce still stranger evidence in support of the belief in this most wonderful power. But, what say you—eh?" "It's wonderfu," I replied, not a little staggered, "but Piper, I am only a little callant yet, and I dinna ken what to think. Might it no hae been only a remarkable coincidence? A thousand reasons occurred to me against even its probability; and, I think, tae, Piper, that siccan a power as 'second sight' shouldna been gi'en to sich a silly man as your freend. I think-tae, Piper, that the young man's vision (or convulsion fit) coinciding so pat wi' the accident, is already explainable in well-known and natural grounds. But surely, Piper, you are heretical

wi' regard to the ither Hielant soopersteetions—"kelpies" (water witches), 'wrisks' (brownies), the 'daoine matha' or 'daoine shith' (the fairies of the north country)?" "Yes, little Sam," replied the imperturbable Piper, smoking his large meerschaum in bed, "Yes, I *am* sceptical of the She'ichs, while, at the same time I trow, with Hamlet, sincerely, there are, or is, a deal more both in heaven and earth than we wot of. And, little Sam, much of the popular mythology of the north is very dear to me; and, it seems, besides, exceedingly beautiful and poetical; so, therefore, I listen to all the tales about the 'supernatural' beings, and let them pass undisputed. They do no harm now-a-days, indeed, they cast over the mist-mantled mountains of the north a kind of enthralling glamour of poetry and romance, to me. But I'll talk to you at large upon the whole of this theme some other day soon. Even—noo, say a wee prayer, steek ye're blinkers, an' gae to sleep. We hae a lang tramp to yerk till in the morning!"

We turned our steps westwards towards Pittenween, where-at, and in other of the coast towns of Fife, I disposed of an enormous number of copies of the following, bumptious, and exceedingly juvenile parody, which I had got printed at the town of Forfar:—

WHAT CAN A YOUNG FELLOW DO WI' AN AULD WIFE?

A LAY BY A LADDIE.

PRICE ONE HALFPENNY.

What can a young fellow do wi' an auld wife?
 What can a young fellow do wi' an auld wife?
 Sure, curst was the siller that tempted me till her,
 To barter my freedom for bondage an' strife!
 Sure, curst was the siller that tempted me till her,
 To barter my freedom for bondage an' strife!

Baith evenin' and mornin' she's scoldin' an' scornin',
 Her tongue, ever waggin', leads me a dog's life ;
 Her commands, her caprice, my sad torments increase,
 Oh, driedfu's the nicht wi' a flytin' auld wife !
 Her commands and caprice my sad torments increase,
 Oh, dreadfu's the nicht wi' a flytin' auld wife !

She moonges, she mummles, she grumphs, and she grummles,
 An' orders me roond wi' a tongue like a knife ;
 'Tis "sense" and not "beauty," she says, I maun boo tae,
 Oh, wae on the day I wed wi' an auld wife ;
 'Tis sense, and not beauty, she says, I maun boo tae,
 Oh, wae on the day I wed wi' an auld wife.

My auld chums, sae witty, on me hae less pity
 Than had wi' Meg Lauder, the Piper o' Fife ;
 Ev'n them wha lauch least on me crack their jest,
 An' speer hoo I like my walthy auld wife ;
 Ev'n them wha lauch least on me crack their jest,
 An' speer hoo I like my walthy auld wife.

But hark ye, my jokers, ye'll maybe prove croakers,
 And change ye your sang when my bank notes are rife ;
 When the auld creature's deid, an' a stane at her heid,
 And I am espoused to a charming young wife ;
 When the auld carlin's deid wi' a stane at her heid,
 And your auld chum's espoused to a charming young wife !

In the course of our perambulations the prophetic piper resumed and finished his narrative regarding his old farming friend "poor John Howe," as herein set down :—"Whaur was I at, Sam—mind ye?" "Whare were ye at piper?" I answered, "here, man ! but, afore I tell ye, mind I want nane o' yer lang, interminable, wearisome yarns. Brek the shell o' yer tale affhand, and hand me the kernel, precise an' concise as the yowk o' a hen's egg, forthwith. Go-a-head, dear piper, I'm only jokin'. Ye were at—John was in the midst of his difficulties when old Burton died." "Ou ay, Sam. Yes, as I was saying yesternight, little Sam, John Howe was indeed hard pressed when rough, good old Burton succumbed ; and at the first Lammas term on

which he paid his rent to the new factor he was constrained to ask him to become his debtor to the extent of £100 sterling for a week or two." "How is this?" said Mr Successor, after John had related to him the story of his heroic struggles and terrible hardships, "You ask me to oblige you to the extent of a whole hundred, for two or three weeks. Mr Howe, my instructions are to collect the rents, not to listen to plausible or pathetic narratives about fly-eaten turnip brairds, and unworkable clays, and dry seasons. His lordship himself, &c." Here ensued about a half hour's lecture about what his lordship's instructions were, interspersed with rueful exclamations and head shakings, relative to his predecessor's unparalleled and deplorable carelessness; and winding up with a detailed statement of what was to be his method of managing the estate, and to ensure the full payment of all the rents on the very day and hour stipulated in the leases.

John, after hearing him patiently to an end, suddenly sprang to his feet, grasped his hat, and, after telling Mr Successor that he "wud be back in a crack," left the room. In a short time he returned, paid down in cash the disputed £100, and departed for good, with an uneasy presentiment in his mind that the man he had just left was henceforth to be his secret and inveterate enemy. All that night he lay awake thinking of the "devilish look" with which the new factor had surveyed him when he returned with the lacking £100, which he had borrowed from a friend for the purpose. He knew—he felt sure in his heart, that Mr Successor hated him for having paid that £100, and having thereby so deftly eluded the coveted power which it, unpaid, would have enabled him to exert over his affairs. And as he reviewed all his circumstances, one by one, in the ominous gloom of that look, he groaned, and almost despaired, from that night, of his ability to fight out the lease. For the next two years he just managed to keep his head above the water and steer clear of the remorseless factor, who appeared to John's distracted fancy as a fury, ever hovering over his head, ready to swoop

down and destroy him did he but sink an inch deeper. The next season and harvest, his last ones in Scotland, were the worst which John had yet encountered—not too dry, like the others, but the extreme opposite—cold, backward, and everlastingly wet and muggy, and consequently unfavourable and disastrous to all crops—saving, perhaps, sheltered and well-drained pastures on light land. His grain would lose about half its value in the harvesting; his twenty acres of potatoes were all rotted and converted, by the disease, into an Irish stew long before the proper time; and his turnips, they being that year on the heavy part of his holding, all perished by drowning, like kittens in their juvenility. His hay, as I told you, Sam, and of which he would have about forty tons, he sold to the new factor for the laird at £6 per ton. But after being sold, it could not be carted to the laird's stables before the grain harvest, owing to the ceaseless wet; and therefore the new factor ordered it to be stacked at Greenknowes, until a fitter opportunity occurred for its removal. But, mark ye, little Sam, the hay was not to be paid for till after delivery, the Lammas rent was about due, John had only some £150 at his banker's—his half year's rent amounted that year to fully double this sum—and so, what was the poor devil to do? His wife and children urged him to go to the factor and tell him all. The factor said he "expected this," that he was "looking for nothing else," &c., &c., but ultimately agreed to lie off until the hay was carted home and accounted for. The harvest came lagging, trailing on—dismal and drenched as a shipwrecked mariner. The grain was half lost, the potatoes entirely so; and, as if at once to put the cope-stone on John's tower of troubles, the factor appeared at his place one day, with a copy of the lease in his hand. Pointing to a clause near the end of it, he imperiously demanded of John "How he dared sell his hay when he was therein so specially and expressly interdicted from doing so during the last five years of his lease?" "Surely sir," humbly replied John, "surely if the laird has prohibited me from selling the hay, it was a pair practical joke for him, through you, to come here and buy it frae me himsel'. Besides, sir, the laird brak'

the bargain, as written down i' the tack, first ; and by daein' sac left me nae choice. Turn ye to clause fifth, sir, an' you will observe that he undertook to divide the big field to the south—the Hill—90 odd acres, into fowre fields ; and that ane doon the road—the North March—40 acres, intil twa, wi' wire fences, an' a' at his ain cost, saving, of coorse, the carriage o' the material. A' this has never been dune, as ye wat weel, sir ; and why ? Simply because I am politically and educationally antagonistic to his Lordship, and more so to his Lordship's factor. But I tell you what, Mr Successor, I am a man, and I will not put up with you."

This uncommon speech of John Howe's was rather a quencher to Mr Successor, but he instantly recovered himself in his own impertinent way. "Mr Howe," said he, "Mr Howe, I only come to administer the lease. In that lease you are forbidden to sell hay, straw, and turnips off the farm. Aren't you?" "Ye impident little devil," answered John, "the hay was sauld to yersel'. If I had nae richt to sell it, ye had nae richt to buy it frae me ; had ye ? Ye have come across me several times, but, as sure as the sun shines in the lift, I will gie't to ye some day. Look oot ! look oot, Successor." "Mr Howe," he replied, "my instructions are that your hay must be consumed upon the faram ; and, further, that all arrears of rent must be paid to me within two months from this date." "Or, what then?" asked John desperately. "In that case," rejoined the factor, "you must know perfectly well, Mr Howe, what can only happen." "I see," said John, at last thoroughly aroused, "sequestrate me the morn if ye like ; tak' everything ; I owe nae man a plack other than the current year's accounts, and but for you, they sid a' be paid to the last stiver. Sequestrate—brek me ; you have ensnared, an' trapped, and chased, an' run me to ruin. But tak' everything. I wadna withhold a flea's bite, not if I were to be knichted or ennobled for't. I am a puir man, sir, otherwise I should lay my case afore the Sherra, an' even, if need were, the Coort o' Session, an' I'd lick ye to

spunk-wood tae, for I wad hae baith law and equity for my advocates. But I am tired and weary o' this sair over-rented place, and still mair sae o' yersel', sir. Ye hae been my relentless persecutor ever since ye got on. I watna what's your real reason for't? But do your warst. I despise you. Good day."

"And so, little Sam, in due time the sequestration was effected, and another victim—another helpless family—was sacrificed to appease the hate, and gratify the malignant pride of an oppressive, tyrannic mortal—a "fellow worm"—dressed in a little brief authority. Oh, how sad, sad it is to remember! How melancholy to think that the fine, manly, and high-talented fellow was utterly broken and irretrievably ruined (at least in Scotland—as an agriculturist), all to gratify the pride and animosity of such a miserably, pultry, scamp. I said melancholy, Sam. It is hellish, maddening, heart-burning. Oh that the curse of the Piper could wither him!

"Many other stories could I tell you that would fitly illustrate the divisions of our classification, but not to day, little Sam—not to day," concluded the Piper, solemnly, drawing a sleeve of his coat awkwardly across his rheumy eyes. "The recalling to mind of noble John Howe's terrible wrongs has overset me. But his story, Sam, needs no comment—its record of naked, gross injustice being such that he who runs may read."

F O U R T H L E T T E R.

DREAMS—THE MODERN SCOTO-IRISH, &c.

Bow low ! Tis good for thee,
Affliction maketh strong ;
Would'st thou be truly great and free,
Be chastened first with wrong.
Deery one look behind,
Mourn not what might have been ;
Be heroes—take the world you find,
Make “ blunders ” blessings mean !

S. M.

“ My dear boy, Sam,” quoth the prophetic and patriarchal looking Piper, as we arose in the morning in the wood of Tullybody, seriously, yet sententiously, “ my dear Sam, I dreamed a very uncommon, and a most vivid and impressive dream last night, without, of course, at the time thinking it was uncommon ; for nothing that we dream ever seems wonderful to us when we dream. So I dreamt that I had been summoned by a direct and special messenger to a grand council of all the angels in the great celestial hall of ghosts. For what do you think, Sam ? For no other than the simple purpose of being publicly chosen, and receiving the holy commission, to blow the trumpet at the last day ! Don’t start, Sam ! the Piper is utterly incapable of approaching within even puritanical view of the vulgar and blasphemous sins of irreverence or levity towards sacred or holy things. True religion and good strong Athole brose are his two grand and never-failing spiritual and corporal sustainers ; and doubly accursed is the fool assuredly who dares refuse or ridicule

either the one or the other ! Well, I dreamed that I stood up before the whole council, and made my bow, and then respectfully asked the angels—"Why, of all the countless millions of spirits and men in heaven and on earth, they had nominated, and, as I had heard, had already as good as elected Me to fill such a momentous post?" "Are you not," said a very thin, gaunt, skeleton-looking, hollow-cheeked angel, of a most sombre and dread aspect—Azrael, the angel of death, I think he must have been—"Are you not the Piper who blew the Laird of Skene's coronach?" says he. "I am indeed, Sir ! what of that ? I said, not the least abashed, Sam !" "Why !" he rejoined, "that fine coronach was heard from Cairngorm to Ballachulish ; and, at the proper time, might have recalled Fingal to life himself ! Take your credentials, no refusals are accepted here—the time is short—lift your documents—they are under my short ribs—use your brief time well, practise trumpeting dilligently !"

"At once—in a moment, Sam—I thought the last day had arrived, was dawning, and that I was standing erect on the extreme summit of a mighty mountain, with a trumpet in my hands like a morning sunbeam in June. I gave one wee preliminary blast. Behold ! old earth seemed to shake and reel and rattle to her centre, and as I looked around, amazed at the miraculous effect of my first blow, I thought that the Skeleton Angel suddenly stood by my side." "Louder !" cried he, and I gave another blast, this time with all my might. "Louder ! louder yet !" he urged again. "There is a man in a dead sleep in the Valley of Gehena still. Blow !" "Some old suicide, or unbelieving son of a Jew," I said, "Let me go down, Azrael, and kick the heretic sluggard out of his wormy den—do, dearest Azrael !"

"In one instant, at this interesting point, Sam, I doubled back on myself, and dreamed that all this was only a dream. And further, I again dreamed that the great hill, on which I thought I had just been heralding the crack of doom, was only a

large table in the supper room of a well-known Glasgow tavern, at which I have often put up and spent many a jolly night, and that the supposed late Gehena sleeper was in reality a tipsy Irish gentleman who had fallen on the floor, and was now sleeping off the effects of his recent potations. And now I dreamed that I leaped from the-table and gave the Irishman a tremendous whack over the hurdies with the poker belonging to the apartment, and which I dreamed that I had been using all the time as a trumpet. I thought the Irishmen awoke, and instantly sprang to his feet, crying, "Holy Vargin! what is the mather? Is it killing and murthering me intirely, you are?" At this stage the dual-dream fortunately collapsed, Sam, and I awoke to find you staring wildly around you. Isn't it strange Sam—eh?"

"Strange, Piper! It was baith strange and sair to me. You auld, fantastic, animated allegory—it was you that strak me, and nae Irishman. Had I kent this at the time I got the lounder, I sid hae garr'd ye pipe yer ain coronach belyve. But ne'er mind, Piper. I like your dream—baith parts o't. It is awfu', an' fearfu' suggestive. Ye're a queer carle, Piper. Nae man in Scotland, I believe, by yoursel, could hae dreamed siccana dream. I canna faddom ye yet. I had a queer dream, tae, last nicht, but it wasna like yours, Piper. Efter we stoppit crackin', I fell soond asleep, thinkin' aboot Montrose—the gallant, the gifted, the heroic, the most noble-soul'd Montrose—fighter though he was for a humbug Prince and a rotten cause—an' dreamed that you an' me—sojers, somehow, in the ither camp—were suddenly surprised and surrounded by a troop o' the enemy, Irish Kernes and Sassenachs. I thocht ye laid aboot ye vigourously wi' the drones o' the pipes, whilk in the hurry you had torn madly asunder, crying "Such is Royal Charlie's will—twa at a blow!" My ain deeds, tae, I thocht were douchty anes; but as I did sae, I thocht the Kernes an' the ither had fled, and that as we were examining the slain, who in great numbers strewed the battle field, ye a' in a moment started back and exclaimed, "D— it, little Sam, I hae killed my faither-in-law—old Swag—my wife's fuither. Old Swag of Whittinghame."

"Pooh!" I dreamed that I answered you, "pooh! a canting butter-tongued hypocrite—a lie—a sham—let him perish. I could mak' a better man oot o' a hollow-hearted boortree rung!" And just as I said this, I received the tremendous whack, whilk ye thocht in your dream ye had inflicted on the hurdies o' the Irish gentleman; and, of coorse, I waukened instanter!" "It is amazingly strange," mused the Piper. "And we both had Irishmen in our dreams—I hope it forebodes us no evil. God forfend the right. Strike the camp, Sam. Come! Ho, for Stirling and Bannockburn!"

Becoming thirsty, and a little overcome by the great heat, we on our way sought out and entered a little roadside house of entertainment, and called for a bottle of Bass. A little old woman—apparently the mistress of the establishment, clean, clever, and tidy, and excessively lively and agile for her years—ushered us into a little parlour, and immediately supplied us with the suction. In this room the Piper was no sooner seated than he emptied his sporran, and began counting his money, prior to banking it at Stirling. While he was in the midst of this financial work, the door of the room was slowly pushed ajar, and a gang of ten or twelve hungry looking but stalwart Irish shearers filed in, each of whom carried a new harvest sickle, having the blade wound round with straw rope. They said to me they had purchased sixpence worth of oatmeal, and that the landlady had kindly undertaken to cook it for them. The appearance of one of those men surprised and perplexed me greatly. I thought that I had seen him before, but could not at first remember where and I was just on the point of telling him so, when all at once it flashed upon me that he strangely and remarkably resembled one of the slain men I had seen in my dream of the previous night—the one whom I had thought the Piper had called his father-in-law—"Old Swag of Whittinghame." This fellow had a hang-dog, crafty, plotting, conspirator-looking appearance all over, and assuredly from the first he was no favourite of "Second Sight"—nor of his master either, for that matter.

The Piper continued counting his cash without heeding them, and when he had done, he incautiously and unsuspectingly cried aloud to me—"Twenty odd pounds, Sam. Twenty since Aberdeen, six or seven weeks, not so bad—eh? Hallo, gentlemen. Excuse me—didn't notice you was immersed head and heels in distracting pecuniary affairs. I abhor arithmetic and grammar above all things. You're for the shearing, I see. Oh, yes, all right. Will you kindly oblige me, an entire stranger, and, I fear, a foreigner to you all, by graciously accepting a glass of grog all round at my expense? Thank you gentlemen, touch that bell, little Sam, please. Landlady, excuse me for troubling you, but will you kindly please bring in a full bottle of your very best 'aqua vitae'?"

"The poor Irishmen's mouths, I saw, began to water—down some of their chins the saliva was pouring like a thunder shower down the mountain sides. They were all overjoyed, and all loud in their expressions of thankfulness to the "purty, beautiful-bearded" gentleman" for this unexpected treat. But before the grog was brought in, the hang-dog looking man had sneaked out of the room unobserved by us all. I was drawn to notice his absence at first by the quiet demeanour of "Second Sight." He was stretched full length under the table, and apparently in profound slumber. He had been uneasy and troublesome ever since the shearers joined us. What then was the cause of this remarkable change? I stared round the room anxious to discover the cause, and then, for the first time, observed that the sinister-faced conspirator had left us. His companions seemingly did not notice his absence until the dram was being distributed, and one and all of them declared they knew not whither he had gone.

The old landlady was recalled and interrogated, but she, like the others, said she knew nothing whatever about him. I plucked the Piper secretly by the sleeve, and drew him a step or two aside, and informed him, jokingly, of the real or fancied

resemblance of the absconded man to his father-in-law of my dream—Old Swag of Whittinghame." "The devil—is he?" interjected the Piper under his breath. "Come, out of this; I surmise what he is after—the money; and what I surmise is always true. The twenty pounds here in the fab in the sporran, he saw it, he heard us say we were for Stirling. I see it as plain as Ben Nevis. There can be no doubt about it. What else could make him slink so secretly away when both crowdy and whisky were awaiting him? But the Piper will baulk him, Sam, and not step a foot out of his way either."

"You are not afraid of him, Piper?" I asked when we had left the little public-house behind us some fifty yards. "Afraid! afraid of him! Is it true that you do not know yet that a true Highlander cannot feel fear for mortal flesh and blood? He venerates and reveres, and is dutiful and faithful—(Oh, how faithful!)—and obedient to his chief, and to his parents, in all reasonable things, and at all times, but he only fears the Prince of Evil—Auld Cloutie—and the kelpies and shi'ichs of his native streams and mountains. The fairies, the ghosts, the wraiths, the evil eye, and so forth, are more terrible by a thousand times to John Highlandman than whole armies of armed Russians. Sam, I could stand up against any Irishman on equal terms and flinch not; but we must be wary (true valour, Sam, is prudent, not reckless), for poor armed Irishmen, alas, can attack defenceless men and women, and even children, from behind stone walls, woods, or anything that will cover and preserve intact their own scalps. The public papers prove this every day. Step into this plantation and let us cut two stiff cudgels for ourselves—young ash trees, not branches, mind Sam. I have a brace of prime steel pistols in my wallet. See, here is one for you, but we must not use them, mind that—that is, Sam, unless we have to do it. In any case don't hurt anybody until you have heard me cry "fire." After that, Sam, down with the dogs, and no quarter. But the cudgel, if possible, is best Sam. Keep close to me if we are attacked, and ply well the cudgel. They can only have their

reaping hooks and stones. There, now keep a sharp look out a-head.

Oh, ah ! what, what was that ? Far away in front, Sam, a man has just peeped over the hedge on the right. The field is a corn one, the corn is not yet ripe, there is no gate at the place, no honest-minded person would secrete himself in such a place, —then, they are there in all likelihood ! Come on !”

It was now late in the evening, for our way since setting out, in order that we might together visit and behold, though only for once in our lifetimes, many spots and places famous in Scottish history, had been long and digressive. The road which we now traversed was a partially wooded, sequestered, and apparently an unfrequented one ; and lay stretched out straight before us as white, and lonely, and deserted, as a desolate, or “preserved,” reach of my native Tyne water. Not a single human being, back or fore, was to be seen. I grew nervous and excited, but I felt no fear, properly so-called, for my confidence in the resource, and wisdom, and prowess of the puissant Piper, was then absolutely unbounded, and I knew by a hundred tokens that he loved me dearly, and he was a Scottish Highlander !

As we approached the spot where the Piper had seen the head pop up above the hedge, he raised himself on tip-toe and looked over, and after a moment, drew back, saying that they had shifted, for he could not see them. These words were just whispered to me when I was felled to the earth by a blow with a paling stake swayed by an unseen arm. Not being, however, much hurt, I immediately sprang up, and found that we were surrounded by a large gang of wild, big, ragged-looking Irishmen, of the navy species, who soon, both by word and action, made their intention fully known to us. It was, without ambiguity, the purpose so laconically expressed in these two time-honoured commandments—“Stand and deliver !” and “Your money, or your life !” The Piper and our assailants, when I arose after my

knock down, were distant from me some fifteen yards, and after calling back "Second Sight," who was making an infernal pother, alternately barking, yelping, and tasting the heels and brawns of the enemy, I heard the Piper suddenly yell like a red Indian, and saw within a moment thereafter two of the foe hurriedly taking their full length measure horizontally on the road. I thought their object such a laudable one that I instantly ran forward and persuaded another of the compatriots to follow their example, by an effectual hint which I gave him with my ash sapling on the back of the head. Hooks, stones, sods, and sticks, were flashing, and flying, and whizzing all round us, and we were severely pressed, and almost borne down by sheer force.

How in the world we escaped from the outrage as we did, has ever appeared little short of the miraculous to me. We struggled earnestly and severely for some time to keep the Irishmen at bay without hurting them much, but at length a red-headed man on the outskirts of the party savagely flung his naked hook at my head. The point of it pierced my neck above the left shoulder, making a wound fully an inch long and two inches in depth; and when I withdrew the hook from it the blood oused out freely. The Piper saw this, and he very naturally supposed in the excitement that I was more seriously wounded than I really was. The sight of the gore streaming down my shoulder and arm inflamed him into ungovernable madness. He fumed and raged like an insane lion, and leaped from one foeman to another brandishing his weapon, not like anything human, but like a veritable devil, and crying continually "back, back, ye Irish scum; a Macgregor; I'll dissect the harns of every one of ye. Back, back, ye bog trotters," &c., &c. Nothing merely mortal could individually withstand his onset, nor the superhuman energy and might of his arm; and so, in a minute or two, the whole band (saving two or three who had prudently skedadled early in the melee, including the captain, or "head-centre," as the Piper called him, he who so much resembled the Piper's "father-in-law" of my dream, "Old Swag of Whittinghame") were prostrate and *hors de combat*.

When this happy point was attained, the Piper, to make our victory a sure and lasting one, bound them all fast—hands and feet—with our napkins, scarfs, and garters, and then carried them one by one to a little burn which ran near by, in a deep pool of which he charitably soused and washed them all like sheep. We then stretched them out on the sloping banks of the streamlet to dreep and dry, bound as they were, and after wishing them all a very good evening, left them to their playful and cheerful Irish cogitations. The Piper had escaped wonderfully—without, indeed, a single knock or scratch. At a poor man's dwelling further on I had my trifling wounds—a bruise on the cranium, a deepish cut in the neck, and another slight one on the left hand—bathed and dressed with lard and lint. The Piper then handed the poor man a "recompense" to go at once and unbind the poor deluded Irishmen, and bring them to his house, and supper them fully with porridge and milk.

Without further ado we in good time reached the sacred bridge of Stirling—a successor and direct descendant of the immortal Wallace one—which we reverently both passed over with uncovered heads, and then straightway took up our quarters for the night in a humble, but very respectable, hostelry in the lower part of this most ancient, royal, romantic, and interesting of Scottish towns. After we were snugly ensconced in our room and had largely supped on beef steaks, Athole brose, and porter, the Piper said that he grieved beyond measure for the men who had so savagely attacked us—for their capability and willingness to do such a thing at this time of day—to waylay and attack, in such unequal numbers, and in such murderous fashion, one lone defenceless man and a little boy, and grieved also for their hard and cruel circumstances—which, no doubt, had been the main factor in suggesting to their minds and constraining them to such a cowardly and atrocious action, but which could only in part condone it. "I love the Irish, little Sam," he continued, "that is, I admire the typical, rollicking, merry, ready-witted, clever-tongued, generous-hearted, happy, devil-may-care Irish

character. I do, I do, indeed. But I abominate with a horror and a scorn which words cannot indicate, many of their present ways and customs and practices. Moreover, the character I have alluded to is the commonly accepted typical one, Sam ; but there are other qualities and elements in the real nature of the Irish—qualities which are deficient or altogether absent in the popular typical estimate of that character—which they would do well, both nationally and personally, to eradicate, if that be possible, as early as convenient.

The "Scotch-Irish," that is the Irish in Scotland, seem the meanest specimens of the nation. Taken as a whole, they are a ragged, filthy, drunken, quarrelsome, supremely-ignorant, and yet a hard-working, long-suffering, chastity-loving, parent-honouring set. I fear their moral influence on the Scottish peasantry is not in the main for good, so far as it goes ; but, thank heaven, that is not far. They are mostly all outside workers, and they do not intermarry with us, although I believe they ultimately must, and be absorbed in the Scotch. The girls are refused domestic service, and the men do not rise in Scotland. I hear it is somewhat different in America and the Colonies, and that many Irishmen get on in these parts as well as any others ; but I suspect that this is owing to the fact that it is chiefly, or only, the most pushing and intelligent individuals of the Irish race who betake themselves to those distant regions.

But give us a song, Sam ! We will go into this great Irish theme systematically and scientifically some day, when we have more leisure and vigour than at present. To-night we have merely been skipping playfully over a small portion of the surface of it. By the bye, I was overlooking your poetic budget the other evening while you were absent from camp for a minute or two, and I noticed, quite accidentally, an Irish piece, about the reaping machines. Give me that, Sam, do ! It will sing somewhat appropriately after our talk this evening." "I'll spout it, but not sing it to you here, Piper. An' ye maun promise no'

to be owre hard on't. Mind ye aye, it's only a bit laddie's—
your 'Little Sam's,' Piper !"

SOME SORROWFUL HARVEST COGITATIONS.

BY PHARLE O'RAFFERTY.

Thim days no more with huks at all
Our boys the corn be's switchin',
Such luck agin no more will fall,
Than ould St Pathrick's preachin'.
All bansthering we now must be—
We boys—both "rags" and "clever,"
A stint to you, a stint to me,
Thin—farewell huk for ever.

Oh ; me own heart was bould an' big,
Whin off I tripped with dearie,
With hip an' elbow, lithe an' trig,
As e'er left Tipperary ;
Kathleen ! she knew'd me for a man,
And sure myself did hear her
Say, to the Loudon masther man,
I was his purtiest shearer.

Me arm it was linkt in the whate,
Loike darlint when I kissed her ;
Bad luck, she's dead ; she's gone complate !
Dear Vargin—how I've missed her !
No more Kathleen, nor huk, nor home ;
To these machanes a stranger ;
All heedless, loverless, I roam—
A fearful Oirish ranger.

'Tis childer's all they want, ye see,
To twist and lay the bands—so ;
With two-three boys loike you an' me,

To make the stuks to stand—so.
The scub machane cooms on loike death,
Which no man can restrict it,
And shaves, loike min fall o'er its path
Most devilish unexpicte!

Ould Sathan larn'd the Scub that made
This noisy baste, I'm thinkin' ;
Och ! how it's cursed the good ould trade,
The harvest foon an' drinkin' !
A port ! It's me own sorry eyes
That's seen more thin the talk ow't !
Thin, a pound a wake, sure, wor no prize
To brats that scarce could crack ow't.

A boy thin could rest his hand,
Nor grave nor masther bother,
And joke with lassies in the band
For swate half hours together.
Them wos the days ! O swate Kathleen,
Who's gone to Heaven before me ;
How tinder to this breast you'd lean,
An' smackin' kisses shower me.

Two horses to a barry chained !
It licks me noight an' mornin'
How such a brut by Sathan framed
Does slick the rushy corn in !
Pat Dolan says, says he, " It is—
'Tis all the noise as does it,"
And sure, when coomin' back it be's
The divil a whaysper has it.

It stud, wan day, at breakfast toime,
Whin we wor busy restin',
The wicked thought coomes in my mind—
The brut' I'd go a-testin'.
The grave was fixin' up her things,
And many a rap did bring her ;
I felt her teeth—whin, whirr, she sings,
And halves my purty finger.

Me blud be on her iron bones,
The nasty varmint creatur' ;

May all her teeth be broke with stones,
And endless chokes await her.
Oh, Kathleen, jewel, up Heaven there,
Look down on your dear Pharlint,
And bid the angels bless me, dear,
For oulden times me darlint.

F I F T H L E T T E R.

AT STIRLING AND BANNOCKBURN.

Roll on the ages owre thee—
Wallace' war-times nae mair be !
But thou, right, and liberty,
Mither Caledon !

Arise, and head the van-guard !
Girt with righteous purpose hard—
Thine auld shield and freedom's ward,
Mither Caledon !

Forward ! Scan thou the march-way,
Wave the world to light and day—
High on hill taps, and away,
Deathless Caledon !

S. M.

“Oh, ay, yes ! My beard at length is gradually becoming unanimous,” soliloquised the Piper audibly, as he was standing at his toilet, before a large mirror, on the morning following the night of our arrival at Stirling. “This unconscionable Mar’s forest of hair of mine — this Celt and Saxton enormity is certainly compromising—no doubt of it ! Both factions, the Reds and Whites—England and Ireland, say, are each losing a little of their former startling individuality, and agreeing to harmonise in one superlative uniformity. I ween not, little Sam, what is the cause of this ? There is, without doubt, a stupendous change going on !” “I dinna ken either, Piper,” I answered, “but may be you are like the Octopus, or the sea Chamelion ? In the case o’ the Chamelion, I hae read that the change is effected by means o’ a coloured pigment enclosed in

wee minute bags in the skin (*chromatopheres*), in the tissue o' whilk are teuch, wiry, muscular fibres, actuated by nerves, ye ken. (What a growth ye are!) Weel, Piper, ne'er mind, but ye trow that the naturalists say that, gif the feebers be relaxed, a milky coloured pigment appears instantly; but gin the feebers contract ne'er sae little, a dark coloured hue directly shows itsel. The nerve centre that dominates thae actions, Piper, you will at once understand to be the suboesophagean ganglion, and that the phenomena in question are analogous to the blushing face divine of a-a-a—"Piebald Piper!" "Quite so, Sam, your scientific knowledge is quite correct, so far as I am aware. And what do you argue from this? You surely do not insinuate that my beard is coloured after the manner of either the Octopus or the marine Chamelion? Five years ago, I do solemnly assure you, it was all of one beautiful bronze hue, and it only turned speckled by becoming partially gray—gray in spots!" "Say, like a cadger's aiver, Piper! But, cheer up man; I canna bide to see ye dung doun that way. The sun himsel' is spotted, and luna! why, man, she is as blotched, an' mottled, an' eluded as a Shaitland Coo! Lat yer dappled, mongrel baird abee the noo, an' let us instantly clunk doun, an' fa' to brekfast—fine fried fresh herrin' frae Loch Fyne, Piper—and, look here, Piper, the odour o' this ashet itsel' wad gar the teeth o' a Queen water like the rock that Moses strak! Just you shed aside a hole through the baird, big enouch to let a horn spune in, and then go a-head—or, gin ye like, I'll mak' ye a spoot wi' knockin' the doup aff this bottle, and insertin' the sma' end through the baird, an' feed ye as a meal mill is fed—happer wise. Oh, Piper, Piper! what a baird ye hae, efter a'!" &c.

As it was Saturday, we resolved to halt at Stirling over the Sunday; and immediately after breakfast we sallied forth to do the "sights"—the Piper officiating as usual as friend, counsellor, and guide, and showing me all over the town, which, apparently, was as well-known to him as his own goat-skin spleuchan.

In the course of our rambles I remarked—"D'ye think that

Bruce was a greater sodger and hero than Wallace?" "Than Wallace, Sam?" shrieked the astounded pibroch blower, with the voice and with the air and manner of a man suddenly, by a terrible accident, tortured out of his senses. "Greater than Wallace! You little d——d idiot—are ye a thing with a brain at all? Or is it only a sham? Keep out of my reach! Such a thing or fact as a hero greater than William Wallace of Scotland, I defy the four corners of God's earth to show. To do so, you'd need produce me a god in his prime, or a physical and psychological human miracle, somewhat after the shape and dimensions of the Grecian Myths. Greater than Wallace; an inconceivable possibility. No, Sam, I'll not hurt you, come here. As a great man, Sam, and as a matchless inspirer and leader of men, and as a patriot unflinching to the death, invincible in all fortunes, and as an almost superhumanly strong and powerful champion of his country's cause, from first to last, and through foul and fair, Wallace stands forth, first, and almost alone, upon earth. A colossal figure—without flaw or stain—for all the world to venerate and emulate, but which no country dare ever expect to equal. I defy you, little Sam, I defy the whole progeny of Adam, to point me out his peer."

In this excited strain he went on until we had left the suburbs of the town behind us. Every word he uttered I instinctively knew that he believed it to be true, in his deepest soul. And I could not give the "lie," nor can I yet, to a single syllable that he said. All history bears him out. Nothing that has ever been brought against Wallace can stand a moment before reason and historical research. He is an entirely unique figure—an unblemished patriot—a matchless champion of his country's liberty and independence, a fit progenitor and hero of the world-renowned race who have succeeded him.

We were now out in the open country. "Sam," says the Piper, calmer, but still with his eyes flashing, and his whole countenance having the semblance of that of an inspired seer,

“Sam! there is St Ninians, and we are approaching the field of Bannockburn itself. Sing to me your very boyish verses on Wallace—quick. I think they will do me good—I think they will bring me down.” I saw his great need, and therefore said, “I shall, Piper. Stand. Your estimate of Wallace is my own, and your spirit shall inspire me—

WILLIAM WALLACE

(Sung to Auld and Gray).

They slew thee—did they? Let it be!
 No more: it cannot be undone,
 But, truly, could thy fate back run,
 I would not wish one breath for thee.

The tyrant and the hero sleep—
 Lift up thy heavens, God, on high,
 Let light abound, let darkness die,
 Let truth thy utmost confines keep.

The tyrant and the hero, then,
 In equal, perfect justice show—
 The fiendish lust—against the glow
 Of truest, noblest love for men.

He, high beyond all factions, grew,
 And, despite them, his purpose held,
 Through petty turmoil, still unquell'd,
 The hero rose—we see him now.

All power, the worldling's power, and gold,
 To stoop and take were at his feet;
 Or, early death, defamed, to greet,
 And let sure time his worth unfold.

And, all undoubting, death was ta'en,
 Through torture and the traitor's free!
 O Wallace: never liberty,
 For this forsakes our land again.

"Bravo, Sam! for a fourteen-year-old chip of a duinhe-wassel and juvenile Lowland bardie, ye do not make me despair of mankind. Maybe there is something below that Tam o' Shanter o' yours yet. Second Sight where are ye? Here, here!"

"This is the Old Bore Stone. Into this was inserted, on the morning of June 24th, 1314, the great lerrick tree flagstaff, which again bore aloft and unfurled in broad day the huge and grand azure banner with the lion rampant of Scotland—the fit symbol truly of a warlike and an unconquerable people. Ay! that is the Gillies' Hill behind, St Ninians on the left and Bannock burn on the right and nearly all round the field. Randolph led the left wing, Douglas and the young Stewart the centre; Edward Bruce, and Keith, the Mareschal, led the right wing, while the reserve, consisting of the Carrick and Argyle men, was taken in tow by the Bruce himself. But, in the name of goodness itself, who be these gentlemen, Sam, down there on the bank? They have surely fallen out! and another battle is on the cards. Let us interfere and prevent further bloodshed upon this already English blood-manured ground. This glorious and hallowed field should be held, by English, Irish, and Scotch—by every true man and lover of liberty—sacred to peace and secured freedom evermore. Hallo there! Hands off, hands off! Cease, or I'll make both of you dree the race which thousands of our fellow creatures ran one very warm day from this field in the olden time with holes in their jerkins. In the name of outraged manhood what is the matter?"

The gentlemen whom the Piper thus accosted were two strong men in the prime of life—an English pedlar from Leeds and an Irish Roman Catholic schoolmaster, or preacher, from Falkirk, and the subject of their dispute was Eth O'Connor, chief of the Connaught Irishmen, who fought on the English side at Bannockburn. These two worthies had both come upon the "field" on the same errand as ourselves—*i.e.*, to visit and to view with their own eyes the scene of such a remarkable and

decisive encounter—two to seven—as the rival nations were then comparable—as here befel in June 1314.

They had incidentally foregathered on the road leading to the Bore Stone, some time before we overheard them, and had fallen out over a dispute about Eth O'Connor. It appeared that the English packman—a very intelligent but withal a fiery and impetuous man, had arrogantly asserted that the Irish auxiliaries had been the reverse of serviceable to the English soldiers, for they, he declared, at an early stage of the battle, had become panic-stricken, and had encumbered and confused their Southron friends with their wild and disorderly behaviour. Father Paddy, on the other hand, had fiercely denied this, and declared in return that the exact opposite was just the truth, for the English bowmen were the first to take to their heels, and if it had not been for the Irish, who had been placed in the forefront of the battle, and were consequently in the extreme rear in the retreat, the “mad Scotchmen would have bate every Southron of them into ‘hog’s hash’—inlade they would!” At this stage they were wrathfully and menacingly pitted against each other when we approached them, and even a Highland “Taishtir” (a reputed second-sighted person), might not have foretold what would have happened had not the gallant Piper so opportunely intervened.

Both disputants agreed to refer the matter to him, so, when the packman from the town of Leeds had succinctly related to us the special points of the quarrel, as above, the Piper says to him, with admirable gravity—“Chapman, I demand, as the mutually-constituted arbiter in this question—a question, to wit, of enthralling interest and everlasting importance to your parts of the United Kingdom—I demand to know your several authorities, if you have any such, for saying what you have said, and from you, likewise, Father Paddy, I have a similar request to prefer.

“My authorities,” quoth the southern pedlar readily, “are

the historians of the period; 'Barbour,' 'Fordoun,' 'Rhymer's Fedædera,' 'English Chronicles,' 'Henry the Minstrel,' and universal tradition ever since, *south* of the Tweed."

"Bah," cried Father Paddy, "shure your historians just wrote what wid cover their naked shame for loosing the battle. A cushla machree. O'Brien himself saw it all and told his brother Phelin, the cripple, and the great writer, and bedad there it is down, nate and swate, to this day, in black an' white, in his own iligant foine hand writing, in his beautiful histhory of the Irish Wars. Now." "A history of the Irish Wars by a cripple Irishman!" retorted with ineffable contempt his opponent. "A cripple authority, indeed. Besides, lad, don't you know that this was not an 'Irish War' at all, but a straight-down up-right tussle for the supremacy in Scotland? Had it been an 'Irish War,' all the Irish would have, without doubt, broken the heads of each other before ever the real 'war' began!"

"Och, be jabbers, give me no more of your blarney?" frantically screamed the priest, "you're an ignorant scub of a man entoirely. No sucking spalpeen of a motherless child would say that a battle in which thousands of thrue Irishmen wor ingaged wos not at all connicted wid the rale wars of the Irish. Bannockboorn here, was both a Scotch, an English, and an Irish fight all at wanst, and at the same time—bad luck to yeez, for a dirty, slaverin', ignorant pedlar!"

"Do any of the English or Scotch historians of the battle," rejoined the persistent packman, "in their several enumerations and accounts of the slain, even make mention of the dead body of a single individual son of St Patrick? Never, Paddy, never. Before the Scots got down to where they stood trembling yonder, they were not there—every broth of a boy of them was rapidly pursuing his way to the Firth of Clyde, where the cobble-boats—mere hen-coops—which were to recarry them to their native styes and bogs, were rumoured to be lying. And, no doubt, they

ran so well that pursuit was seen to be useless. I believe myself that not over fifty of your countrymen fell at Bannockburn—and doubtless a full half of that number dropped down through sheer terror. Eth O'Connor, behanged !”

“Now thin, you poor, paltry spalpeen stocking pedlar you, you ignorant ajdiot, I’ll condemn yeez wid your own witnesses. Both Barbour and Fordoun, as well as the Fedædera, and Anderson’s *Numismato*, I belave, all repeatedly spake to the splendid Irish undher the Earl of Ulster; and the raison why no Irish corpses were found afther the battle is bekase they wouldn’t die amongst the blackguard, unshriven Englishmen—haythens—and may St Patrick and all the holy saints comfort thim for it.” The pedlar again advanced a step to answer this last diabolic taunt, when the Piper suddenly interceded, and waved the olive branch betwixt the belligerents, in the colour and form of his Athole brose horn, the first blessed sight of which aeted on the foemen as oil poured out in barrels does on the troubled waters.

Both combatants were hushed in a moment. “Look here, gentlemen,” cried the Piper, “look here, this capacious horn is filled to the bung with the best, ay, the most delicious, with that most delicious national beverage commonly called Athole brose, and it is of my own manufacturing, and therefore I can assure you both of its reality. Retire with me and this little lad to the Bore Stone, and one or two applications at this magie horn by each of you will reconcile everything. What I propose is, that we all instantly retire to the old flag stone and pree a jorum of this exquisite brose all round, in the doing of which I will deliver to you my humble judgment on the merits of your late unfortunate disagreement. What say you, my friends?” The Yorkshire chapman, the Irish dominie or priest, and the Scottish ballad-singer, having severally assented to this invitation, they marched with the Piper at their head to the stone-like Free Masons in procession.

"Father Paddy," solemnly began the Piper, after we had taken up our appointed places, "Father Paddy, we are going to drink this foaming quaigh to the prosperity and glory of Ould Ireland—the beautiful, green Erin—may she ever be green and beautiful, your beloved native land. And now when we have done this, we will refill and drink the self-same toast, with all honours imaginable, to great and merry Old England, and kindly, bold and brave, and true Auld Scotland—the land of common sense, bagpipes, and Athole brose. What do you say?" "And the land of Free Kirks and sectional disturbances." "No more of that, Sam. Now then, we shall fill once more and drink, hand-in-hand, to the eternal and indissoluble union of this matchless tripartite—the Red, the White, and the Blue—England, Scotland, and Ireland. With regard, gentlemen, to your late terrivee, why, it was merely a wordy one, and there let the matter end—make it not a "swordy" one. My own opinion is, that (keep quiet, Sam,) you were both partly wrong and partly right. No doubt, Father Paddy, many of your countrymen fell at Bannockburn. No doubt of that. I have no doubt of that whatever, myself; but you needn't bewail them now, they are all dead, and, besides, they had no business to be here that day. At the same time, pedlar, you were correct in saying that many of them ran away. If you had stretched your imagination wide enough to have embraced your own countrymen also, you still would have been rigidly and indubitably correct. In fact running away from here, gentlemen, on the twenty-fourth of June in the year 1314 was an ordinary occurrence. Many people witnessed the fact, and some of these people put an instant stop to the stampede by cutting the runaways in two with scythes and what not, and shearing the limbs and heads from others. In fact, gentlemen, from this starting stone whereon I now stand took place on the day I mentioned the greatest race that this world has ever seen yet. The Welsh ran, the Irish ran, the English ran, and the sympathetic Scots followed their example and ran after them. The Scots, being fresh, though after long years of turmoil and privation and unspeakable other calamities, naturally

overtook many of their sweating, fat Southron friends, and saluted them in the then military fashion by feelingly touching their vital parts with the handy claymore or battle axe of that time. Such was the retreat of the Southrons from, and such was the great courtesy of the Scots at, Bannockburn on the 24th of June 1314. Let us thank the Lord for all his mercies. The Scotch gave that night free lodgings to many, many thousands of weary, world-tired men. To men, too, who came to plunder, and murder, and ravish, and enslave them. No wonder that from here the running away fever became epidemic even amongst the quadrupeds present. But, alas! it is a melancholy and well-established fact that a horse—a noble charger—bolted from here with a daring royal jockey astride him, and could not be reined in until he dropped dead close to the side of a herring boat at Dunbar—sixty miles from the field. The boat, however, proved very convenient, as the young prince was going to rejoin his relatives in England anyway, and for a golden fee the obliging boatmen were induced to hasten southward with all speed. The horse, gentlemen, as I said, died of this running off distemper. It is a catastrophe to be lamented evermore; but many many more of the creatures of the earth partook that day of a similar fate. Curious coincidence, gentlemen. The king, who so bravely pulled up the runaway steed at Dunbar in order to get off and lighten its back, said, as it flung its legs astride in the last agony, ‘He was a clever beast, but it got its reward while it lived by having the immeasurable honour conferred on it of having been ridden to death by a king.’ Don’t frown, pedlar—tit for tat you know.”

“One word more, and especially in your ear, Paddy. It is so manifestly favourable for all the various interests, both actual and conceivable, of all these islands, British and Irish, that they should be united politically and legislatively in one grand brotherhood, and ruled by one Imperial Government, that I will not detain you by urging it. It is right that a noble people should love and cherish its history—when that history is worthy

of being cherished,—but I think that this should only be done by civilised nations in the same way that a full-grown man may look back upon the years, and deeds and ways of his early youth. The time when it was excusable that we should, like healthy boys, be pitched at loggerheads against each other, has long gone past, and may now be described as the period of the thoughtless boyhood of the United Kingdom. "Wee Scoty" did wonders at Stirling Bridge, and here, and on many another blood-stained field—ten thousand fields—"Little Johnny Bull" did well everywhere, and especially in France, where he won his spurs, and at Falkirk and Flodden. Wild, scrambling young Pat, did—ah—well, through no fault entirely of his own—his best, and often got tripped up and cuffed! But what about that? Young Ireland, when engaged with his brothers, has everywhere, and at all times, approved himself a lad of calibre. Besides, gentlemen, and what is far more, the softest fellow, as a fighting boy, that I knew at the High School in Edinburgh, has grown up and made himself famous as a man of genius and an artist, and through his own unaided exertions has acquired a large fortune, although he is yet considerably less than sixty years of age. May Ireland not do similarly? If she does, Paddy, (to change the gender), depend upon it none will be prouder of it than her two sisters. Do not preach estrangement or separation, I pray you, if you really desire the welfare of your native Isle. Separation now is an impossibility—sheer, in every direction; but were it to become a realised fact in the case of Ireland, that fact, gentlemen, and the day on which that fact became one, would at once both be the blackest of all the blackest truths and days that ever yet Ireland saw.

"Now, good bye, gentlemen, we must part. I have to take home this laddie; he might lose himself alone, and he wants a sook! We will call you up at Falkirk, Father Paddy, and, mind you, I'm not done with you yet! What, pedlar, are you bound for Stirling? Then hook on to us—we'll tow you to a haven of rest and plenty—eh, little Sam? Ta-ta, again, Paddy! Three

cheers for the Red, White, and Blue—now and for evermore inextricably amalgamated and conjoined !”

All my own thoughts on this celebrated battle field, I have purposely kept to myself in the meantime. On going down the brae, the Piper was very quiet, and solemn at first, but he suddenly stopped me and the Englishmen, and said, “Sam? I am no prophet of the future, I never pretended to be that. But, my little boy, look around you—what a country this is! A country of great men, great doings, and mighty works! Sam, see ye out yonder by Aberdour on the Fife side?” “Yes,” I answered, “fine, Piper, what about it?” “Little Sam! a thing will be done in yonder direction in a few years, that will astonish all the earth. A bridge will be built from shore to shore, over which railway trains will run! Yes, Sam—I have seen it, as we were coming down the hill!” [These prophetic words were spoken to me by the Piper, on Saturday the fifth day of August, in the year 1854.—S.M.]

SIXTH LETT E R.

LAST DAY WITH THE PIPER, &C.

Does't "shock thy tender soul to see
The good and true to ruin shied,
While up life's sunny heights descried
The false and vile mount fast and free?"
Ah! lad, this is but seeming ill,
The fattest land's at foot o' hill.

"Some whiles by thunderbolts to earth
Are struck; by ruthless engines some
Are crushed, or torn limb from limb;
Many are maimed, or blind from birth,
And countless creatures their life long
Endure the pain of others' wrong.

"With purposed wrong and accident,
War, famine, massacre, disease,
And ignorance—chief cause of these—
This world's way is darkly pent!"
But even, with these full in thine eye,
Can'st thou no god but chance desery?

S. M.

On the Monday morning, after our Saturday's visit to Bannockburn, the Piper and I left Stirling and parted in the churchyard, which lies at the southern ontskirts of the town. Alas, this parting was to be our final one. We had arranged to join company again two months afterwards, to a day, at "Auld Alloway Kirk," in Ayrshire. I had then done all the country north of the Firths of Forth and Clyde, and what still remained for me to perambulate and minstrelise was the southern portion of Cale-

donia, comprising the counties of Lanark, Renfrew, Ayr, the West and East Galloways, Dumfries, Peebles, Selkirk, Roxburgh, Berwick, and then, harking back, *via* the Tweed and the upper district of Mid-Lothian, and Bathgate, into Linlithgow, and, finally, straight as an arrow's flight through the heart of Mid-Lothian, back, for "guid an'a'," to bonny and beloved Clover Riggs. The Piper informed me, sorrowfully, that he had an unavoidable engagement within three days in Edinburgh—that meet it he must—and hinted that it was connected with a projected medical examination of and consultation about some organic complaint he had.

He stated also that he would embrace the opportunity of being in Edinburgh and learn if nothing could be done for his famous speckled beard, and added that he would not lose such a chance for a dukedom. "How is that?" I asked, curious beyond measure to know, and, after some hesitation, this astounding reply came from him in return—"I don't mind telling you, Sam, for you possess the feck of my secrets already. It is because then (will you believe it?) I cannot any longer endure the impertinent and vulgar staring, and the heartless, brutal, jibes, and would-be philosophical comments of the tamie-nories I encounter daily in my musical peregrinations and public mode of life." Had the earth opened at my feet, and Robinson Crusoe and his man Friday issued in full rig from the hole, I could not have been more perplexed and dumfounded than I was on hearing (from the Piper, of all men) this amazing and lamentable reply. Before shaking hands and bidding adieu for such a lengthy spell of time, we lingered long and fondly by each other, and eventually sat us down upon a grassy bank by the roadside, when and where this unfathomable being abruptly, seriously, and solemnly inquired of me—"Whether I had reflected much at anytime on the subject of physique and personal appearance." I answered readily enough that of course I had never yet done so extensively, specifically, or deeply, although at the same time in my own heart I knew too well I had mused for months

together upon the form and face of a certain shy little nameless lassie in East Lothian. Her personal appearance I had without doubt reflected on, and this I slyly hinted to the Piper. "Hold, Sam, insinuate no nonsense. I was never more absolutely serious in my life. Sit still, I wish to talk to you earnestly for five minutes on this matter. You will guess my reasons afterwards.

"Douglas Jerrold tells the tale of a young man who was doomed to tramp this weary pilgrimage of life with a hump on his back, and who, whenever his deformity was jeered at exultingly, laughed back in the face of his tormentor—'Thank God for my back.' This was, logically, equivalent to the young man's acceptance and preference of evil before good. But nobody can believe that—if the youth was sane—he really and truly expressed his earnest thought in his cynical rejoinder. Were mankind, little Sam, arrived at that paradisiacal millenium which Shelley loved so much to dream of and idealise in his divine poetry—were the whole race, answering the irrepressible cravings of world-wide sympathy, the undying yearnings of earth's noblest philanthropic souls, to recognise each unit of humanity as a fellow unit, a neighbour link in the great cable of universal brotherhood, then, and only then, might the poor maimed aliens look for justice at the hands of their more physically fortunate fellow mortals. At present, by the sad accident, it may be, of a lame foot, an injured eye, a faulty back, a twisted nose, or a parti-coloured beard even, they are pitilessly condemned by the vast majority of all classes—despite what mental greatness or moral worth they may possess—to expiate their unmerited and inevitable misfortunes at the drag wheels of society, where scorn—often scorn of the bitterest—is not infrequently the only award of merit, and where, to them, jeers and jibes, and beastly unfeeling laughter, are the attendants of publicity." "But, my dear Piper, certes this is a muckle owre-drawn statement. I canna believe that a man, because he may—through accident, or even

‘natural malformation,’ have a lame or distorted feature, or a ‘pie-bald’ baird even—that he is open to, or is in reality ever the recipient o’ such barbarous cruelties at the hands of his fellows as ye hae spoken o’. Byron an’ Scott, for insince, were baith the grand twa o’ them ‘lamitors,’ yet they enjoy, and shall, for ten thoosand years to come, a world-wide raipitaishin, and a hunderither insinces cood be gien to pruve that yer praisint statements are far, very far, frae the living aektnality, an’ that they are, in fack, only the bitter, fause, morbid cogitations in words o’ a maybe owre-fine strung mind an’ nature, induced by aixcessive brooding on its ain peculiar bodily fauts an’ flaws. Is that na sae, Piper? Man, Piper, believe me, your tortoise-shelled baird is yer greatest physical glory! Cheer up!”

“Sam, with my whole heart and soul, in union with my mind, I believe that there is something in you. If I did not, I would not sit talking to you as I am doing now—to you, a suckling, a mere boy. Well little Sam! two or three years ago, your sentiments were mine too; but sad, sad, experience has blown them from me beyond the moon. I care nothing for myself—no common or uncommon man can hurt—or even touch for that matter—the imperturable Piper, when once he has his all-sufficing, all-protecting philosophic mantle wound around him. He is more secure then the rhinoceros in his hide, or the hedge-hog in his armour of spears. But, some day, little Sam, you will be a scribbler—I think you will, and I want you should take up the literary cudgels in behalf of these poor outcasts, these hapless ostracised wounded ones, and induce your brethren at least to mingle pity with their judgment of them.”

“Piper, you surprise me, mair an’ mair, Tell me what you want, and I’ll ride the air on a broomstick to attain it?”

“I want you to listen attentively in the meantime, and to use your own eyes and thinking faculties afterwards, and the thing is as good as done.

“Byron,” said the Piper, “no doubt, wrote poetry, and he had a lame foot—yet the universal voice of the civilised world lifted him to nearly the very summit of fame (how tame are the

greatest bards of our day to him !), and there he still sits, and will sit until the foot in question—which gave him so much care and sorrow—is a grain of dust strewn by the idle wind. But, mark you, and this is the whole question—what might not Byron have been had his foot not been lame? In the right answer to this query, I opine, lies the true reply, and the indisputable evidence of the argument of this way-side crack of ours, namely, that physical defect is commonly and inhumanly made a barrier in the way to public pre-eminence and usefulness."

"Piper," I here interjected in spite of him, "you are assailing an adamantine rock! What is, must be, it is in human nature, and canna be uprooted."

"Not a bit of it," he rejoined, quite calmly, and lighting his pipe, after kissing fervently the Athole horn, "not a bit of it." It is simply a remnant of the old savagery. Take Pope—he was very little—small—but much deformed in person. No doubt he also attained despite his fearful external hindrances, to great reputation in the poetic field; but suppose for a moment that he had been no poet at all, but say still a born genius, with great faculties and mental capabilities of an oratorical kind. What then? Do you imagine, you little fool, that with his terrible physical failings, he would have been allowed to benefit mankind one jot? His God-given powers, in such a case, would only have been as the embodied sublimity of farce. Although in verity a second Demosthenes, he would inevitably have succumbed to ignorant and heartless ridicule, and died without even being able to enter that rookery of British Magpies, the House of Commons. No, Sam, no spoken orations, however eloquent and excellent in themselves, would have gone down with the flippant, frivolous masses of this country, had they been uttered by a Pope. He might have been, perhaps, brilliant in the editorial sanctum, or reigned in the reporter's crib, but on the public platform his genius, by the mildew of a false ridicule, would inevitably have been blighted in the early braird.

“I am very far from contending that all bodily deficiencies are made drawbacks on the road to fame—and therefore inimical to the good of the world. Often, indeed, they are the very reverse. When they immediately excite our pity, or directly appeal to our sympathies, they are so. It is only when the imperfections awaken feelings of silly mockery and raillery that they become an obstacle. A blind man on a public rostrum will incite ‘encores’ by saying something which his open-eyed fellow would think himself well repaid by drawing closer the attention of the audience with. A deaf mute is the fondling of his neighbourhood; every bar to his physical or intellectual enjoyment or advancement is eagerly removed. No cloud, but the dark one that shadows his destiny, and which cannot be dissolved, is allowed to obstruct his pathway here below. And all this is as it should be. But what is the lot of the poor devil whose want or peculiarity, induces the spectator to loathe or laugh? Alas! Alas!!

“Though his grasp of mind be as gigantic as east to west, though his heart be as pure as the fountain of heavenly charity itself—welling ceaselessly forth all-sustaining pity over the never-ending woes of humanity; and though his battles and life-long struggles against the evils and enemies of his kind, border on the superhuman—no matter, Sam—on every public street and turnpike he will be leered at like a donkey, mocked and taunted by the ignorant (and often by the learned likewise), in every resort of men and women, taken for a ‘ninny’—a pigmy—or a rank stark barbarian at large. In company, however select, he will be kept in the background, cowed by fools and brainless fops, shunned by all, or nearly all, the ‘women-kind,’ made the butt of many a ribald and thoughtless joke, and be doomed to roam around as the living show, and animated wonder on two legs, of the juveniles; and be forced down as the associate of old maids, decayed cousins, and the vulgar and the illiterate. Yet you would ask me, little Sam, ‘what is a mere bodily defect?’ They alone know what it is who have been cursed with one.”

"Piper," I said, when he had halted a moment to draw breath, "Piper, I ne'er thocht on't this way before. Oh, excuse me! To hear ye talk wi' sich a force and fluency, and apparent sincerity, ane wad think ye had come through the 'curse' heid an' feet yersel'. But this canna be, for arena ye a strappin', handsome John Highlandman? an arena ye a little morbid on yer momentous baird? What a poet, what a dramatist, ye must in fack and reality be, Piper."

"All I have told you," he resumed, "I learned through my beard, but I have also ruminated much on this matter. If the personal maim, or scar, or whatever it is, be an ugly one, to some in certain paths of life it is fatal, and to all it is always far more than what the thoughtless revilers conceive, or, I am persuaded, contemptible nothings, as most of those revilers are, they would cease in a great measure to vent their poor, poor monkey squeaks and hiccuppings at the sad misfortunes of their kind—their often immeasurable superiors, fifty times to one! But this is a truth, Sam, and a glorious though sad one—


‘The poor, oppressed honest man
Had never sure been born,
Had'st there not been some recompense
To comfort those that mourn.’

"It is sad, little Sam, because the recompense the poet alluded to is death; and yet its application extends to every son of Adam. It is something for the maimed to know that the vast majority of their revilers, even though in other respects it be a galling fact, are illiterate and heartless nonentities, and that, in the language of Charity, 'they know not what they do.' Were a man always what his outward semblance predicated or indicated him to be, no reasoning could for one moment justify or excuse scurrility; and the ridiculed, supposing him to be a blockhead, has really far more to jeer at in his assailer than the other in him. But he can't see it, and therefore I fear he must just gape and giggle among the little children and his brother

idiots. Shoo! contemptible friddles. They would really not be worth wasting words on, but for the incalculable amount of pain which their unfeeling conduct creates.

“I would ten thousand times prefer a great or good soul, accompanied with all the physical deformity and monstrosity that ever disfigured or made hideous mankind, than a fine handsome body, encasing an unfeeling heart or a silly, weak brain. For what are the jibes or jeers of even whole multitudes, to a snug, impregnable philosopher? Bosh, bosh!

“Sam, meditate deeply on what I have said. We part soon. Don’t cry, my little lad—pass with me into this many-tombed churchyard, for it is there I wish to bid you good-bye for the present. I brought you here on purpose. We have vowed to meet each other again, this day two months, by the far renowned ruin of Alloway’s ‘Auld haunted Kirk.’ From that hallowed spot, if all goes well, we will resume in company our beautiful Scottish wanderings. But, oh, dear, little Sam, ye wat weel how the Piper lo’es ye, and let that comfort ye, my dear little laddie. I had purposed to unbosom myself to you ere we parted at this time and place, but this I have discovered to be unwise, in fact, out of the question at present. My reasons will fully satisfy you when you learn them, be assured of that. In one sentence I could divulge, or rather strip and abandon myself of every shred and stitch of mystery, and stand forth before you, divested of all secrecy, the actual and undeniable gentleman, the ‘Piper,’ truly as he is, before your longing and astonished eyes, but I really dare not do so yet, Sam—I dare not do so yet. However, should we never meet again, for death and other things come unlooked for sometimes, Sam.” (Oh, how little did I dream, when listening to those last words, that the truth of them was to be so soon verified by the fate of the speaker himself.) “I shall take care that you are, in due and proper time and season, fully apprised of my secret; but what, in the name of all the gods, is that dog doing?



"There is surely something seriously deranged about him—perhaps it's his stamack. But why is he whining and wailing in that manner?" "Oh, Piper," I sorrowfully answered, "it's no his stamack—there naething wrang wi' his stamack—it's as teuch an' strong as your Athole brose horn. It's his hairt. I ken him fine. He jalooses, somehow, that you are gaun awa'—that we are gaun to pairt—because he kens weel that ye hae been mair than a second faither to his maister, the brute's oot o' his wits wi' grief."

"Hang it! I never beheld such a dog before. He is as trusty-scented and faithful as Bran, the dog of Fingal, himself. I declare I love every hair in his tail—such a tail as it is. It even beats my beard. But speak to him, and don't let him howl so. It doesn't seem too seemly in a churchyard. That's it—hush Second Sight. Now, Sam, pursue your noble, self-given task honestly and fearlessly (I'll rejoin you in two months) and your reward will assuredly follow. I depart also upon a self-appointed work—a very painful one—a work in the doing or enduring of which I must perforce expose myself to dangers grave—dangers of life and limb. But do not be afraid, I account myself as nothing." I was too ill to answer, and so I said nothing.

"This is the spot where we will shake hands. Under our feet direct repose the ashes of a fine young gentleman—a great friend of mine—one almost as dear to me as yourself, not so dear little Sam, but very near it, and one who had, in literal truth, not a single enemy upon earth. He 'accidentally' lost life at the age of twenty-one, by the bursting of the boiler of a little steam engine—his own construction. Before we part allow me to read to you a rough and rude rhyme, which I made for my own satisfaction on my first visit to his tomb here, a few years ago. Although rude, of course, little Sam, it indicates my best and deepest thought upon the matters of which it treats:—

AT THE GRAVE OF A YOUNG FRIEND WHO
WAS ACCIDENTALLY KILLED.

He's dead, this is his grave ! Is then
This a' we ken ? Oh, I would ken,
In very fact, if thus my frien'
 Shall pass away ?
And here life's wondrous process en'—
 In kirkyard clay ?

In painful fancy, all intent,
From birth and upwards, stent by stent,
I trace thy strange "development,"
 'To manhood's size ;
When—world of wonder—death is sent,
 And here thou lies !

Are then thy twenty years in vain ?
Thy tender parents' care and pain ?
Thy hard won lear ?—all life inane,
 Or as a feast,
At close o' whilk, death yawns "Amen,"
 And sleeps the rest ?

Conjointly with thy brains away,
I trace thy soul's growth, day by day ;
Now, here that brain, compact of clay,
 Death-struck, dissolves.
But where that soul itself ?—away
 'Yond our resolves.

Is aught in Nature a vain boast ?
Is aught in Nature ever lost ?
Have not all things a purpose—most
 Even seen by man ?
Where, then, is thine ? not here death cross'd
 Ere life's mid-span.

In a' the works an' ways of God,
 Discern'd along life's devious road,
 I thought—poor worm—injustice showed
 In much I saw ;
 Deceived, by lack of power, to prod
 His simplest law.

In a' we really understand—
 Grains dropp'd from Nature's secret hand—
 What wisdom, measureless, an' grand,
 Astounds our view ;
 Proclaiming love's supreme command,
 A' Nature through.

Then, can this tomb the finale be,
 O' a pure being—such as thee ?
 If't can—in thy sad death I see
 The rule despotic,
 Of chance, mishap, and destiny—
 Blind, mad, chaotic.

It may be—I care not if 'tis—
 The fact that, whether woe or bliss,
 The Ego finds in warlds than this
 (As here, indeed,)
 For her a form corporeal is
 The first grand need.

What then, ye dull, material core
 May not the Power that, from a spore,
 Developed man, develope more—
 Than ye discern ?
 Can ye wi' thy peep-glass explore
 The all eterne ?

Nae mair ! Here on thy grave, dear lad,
 I'll wail thy fate, sae seeming sad,
 While deepest thought, the deeper hand,
 With faith in me,
 Gives to my heart assurance glad
 'Tis well with thee !

Wail on, thou dear December win'
 Fa' down, mirk nicht, an' close within

Thy blackest pall this warld o' sin !
Death beds and graves !
What reck we, gin we ken there's ane
Wha sees an' saves ?

Sam, on this spot, on this grave we part ! Mind you to meet again. This day two months, on Auld Alloway's auld haunted brig, I will meet you sure. Dear little Sam, don't cry so. The Piper and you are not going to part. Far from it ! Far from it ! Hold up your head ! Now, brave little Sam, let me see what a gallant little lad you are. That's it ! Dry your eyes, the Piper is only going to Edinburgh ; and will be back before his little callant has sung his way through Galloway. And when we meet, little Sam, we will meet as they do in the Happy Land — 'never to part no more !' "

And so we parted. I went west, and he went east to Edinburgh, where in due time he was operated upon by Professor Syme for his ailment. That operation he soon recovered from, and daily almost he sent me telegrams, relative to his health, and other matters. By this time, I was well aware of his social rank and importance. The reason for his assumption of the lowly rôle of an itinerating Piper, was a very romantic one.

What I otherwise know of the "Piebald Piper," I dare not yet divulge. But, long, long years afterwards, I came to learn that he was a chieftain, who, having fallen in love with a beauteous young lady, a year or so after the death of his first wife, (the Whittinghame Shrew), wagered or bargained with another young chief—who was also spooney upon her, that he would have her, on condition that he (the Piper) for seven years maintained himself as a wandering musician, and planted yearly into the National Bank the sum of £500 sterling, as his exclusive earnings from the manipulation of the Highland bagpipes.

Of course, I regret exceedingly that I cannot disclose more fully the personality of this truly remarkable man, because he

was closely connected with people of the "upper ten," whom even to name or allude to, would assuredly be considered in me an impertinence.

On the day following the one mutually appointed by us for our re-union at Alloway Kirk, I received the following telegram in Ayr, while sitting eating my supper :—

"Leith. Found dead on shore. Man with spotted beard. Had in breast pocket letter addressed—'To Samuel Mucklebackit, at his lodgings, Burn's Tavern, Ayr. (Immediate.)'"

With the next post came the letter, which had been found in the pocket of the corpse.

I did not sleep that night. I did not sleep the next night. After that I slept for two weeks without waking in the infirmary of Glasgow. My chief trouble was "the want of something"—I did not know what, in the wild sea of fever. Gradually I came ashore again to life and consciousness—more horrible than tongue can tell. Where was the Piper? "He was dead"—was he? Then I would be "dead" too. Be beside him. I would go and fall down before an advancing express train.

But would the Piper approve this? Would it not seem to him the act of a coward thus to fly the grief of his death? I was torn in twenty ways with sorrow simultaneously, and did not know scarcely what I was doing. But as the Piper, I knew instinctively, would have me do, I said finally—"I will live, and do his commands." He told me often and often about Wallace and all the other grand Scottish characters, and he always said at the hinder end—"Little Sam, how splendid do they look. Go you, my lad, and do, or try to do, like them."

But the Piper was dead. Slowly, very slowly, I became able in the Infirmary to stand on my feet, and shortly after that

to creep and totter back to East Lothian, where, after the expiration of about another year, I was at length pronounced strong enough to be permitted outside as far as the pump before the back kitchen door.

* * * * * *

The manner of the “taking off” of the heroic “Piebald Piper” was very simple, but, like himself, abrupt, startling, and tragic. He had been, as stated, under Professor Syme, as a patient, by whom he was prescribed to take (after the operation performed) as much sea air as he could possibly have. Then the Piper had nothing to do before keeping his appointment with me at the Brig o’ Doon, other than follow his eminent surgeon’s hints. So every day he went down to Newhaven, thence walked to Leith, and drove home to Edinburgh.

On the last day of his life he was sauntering down Leithwards, opposite Trinity Road, when all at once his further progress was arrested by the cries of a boy in the water. The lad was evidently fast drowning. The Piper saw this, and, despite the weak condition of his health, without a moment’s hesitation dashed into the sea, and got hold of the child, but as he was swimming back with it to land he was suddenly seized with cramp, and both he and the little boy perished. Much fuss and palaver at the time were made about it in the public prints, and countless were the conjectures hazarded as to his identity, but the great majority of the writers agreed that he was a gentleman belonging to the great Highland family—and in this they were rigidly correct. Further, in every respect he was to all those who knew him well, and could fathom and appreciate him, a natural born philosopher and poet; and as such, and as a hero who was accidentally cut off before he had become famous, the “Piebald Piper” will be remembered evermore. To them, at least, his fame will be as eternal as that of either “Blind Harry” or “Thomas the Rhymer.”

F I N I S.











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